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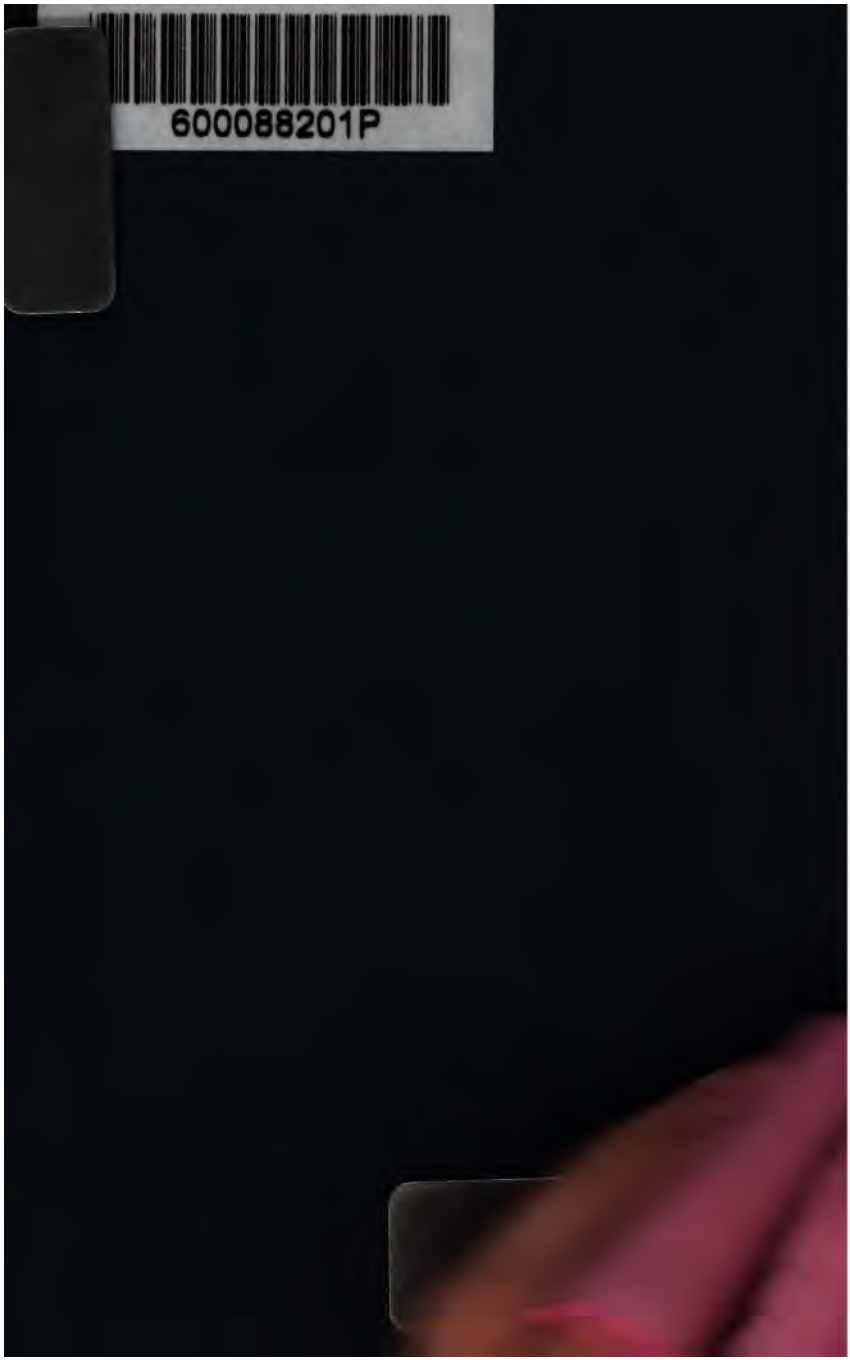
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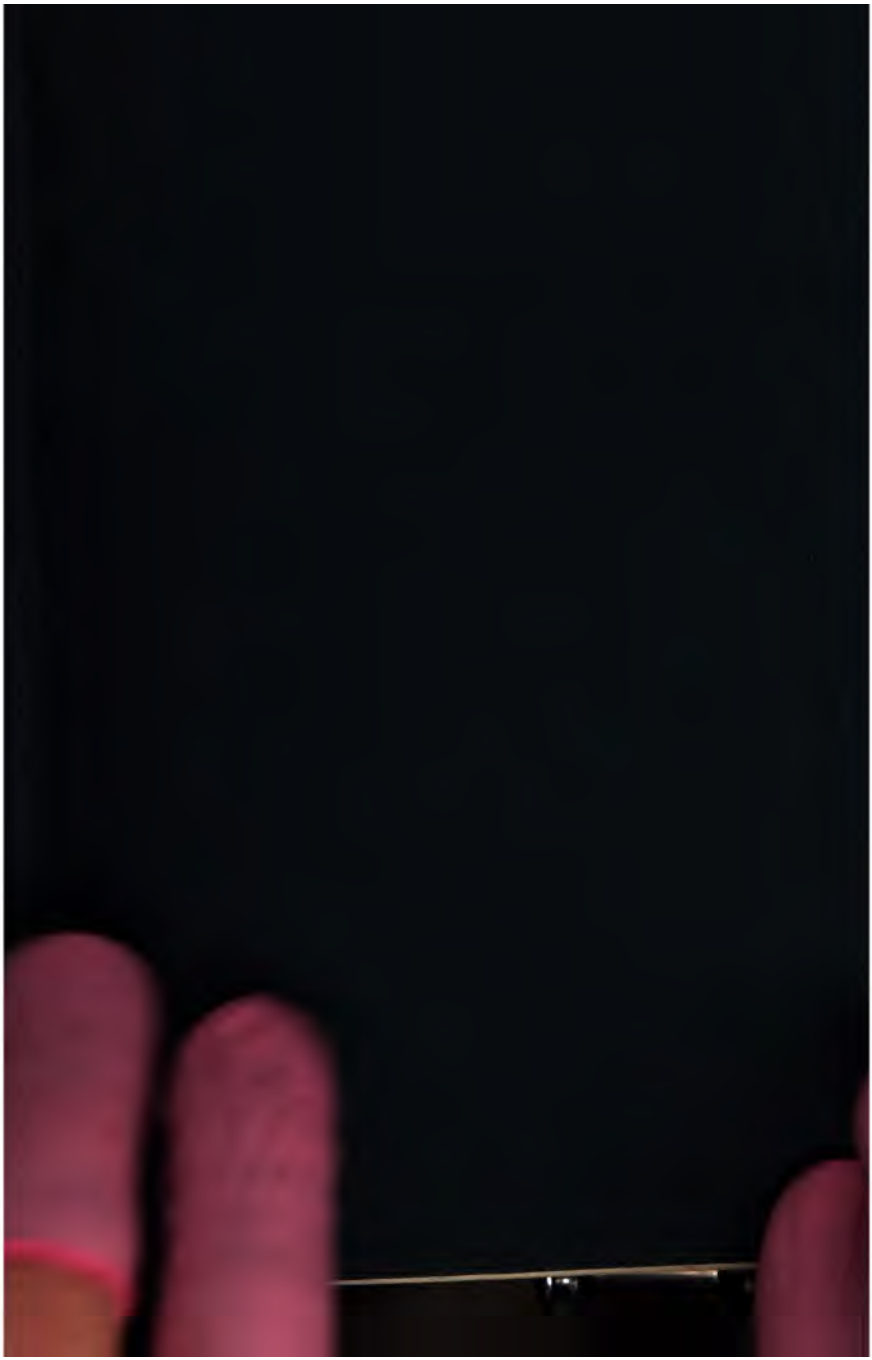

MODERN INFIDELITY DISARMED,

IN A

REPLY TO M. RENAN.

MODERN INFIDELITY DISARMED,

IN A REPLY

TO

M. RENAN'S LIFE OF JESUS:

BEING

A BOOK FOR THE TIMES,

EMBODYING THE PRINCIPAL EVIDENCES OF THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, AND OF THE UNCORRUPTED PRESERVATION OF THE GOSPEL RECORDS;

TOGETHER WITH

A DEMONSTRATION OF CHRIST'S DIVINITY,

THE PERSONALITY OF SATAN,

AND

THE SUPERNATURAL CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

BY

E. STEPHENS,

Author of "The Doctrines of an American Destructionist Candidly Considered and Refuted," and "Truth Elicited, and the Fundamental Errors of the Papacy Exposed, in a Conversation between a Roman Catholic and a Protestant."

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MODERN INFIDELITY DISARMED,

IN A

REPLY TO M. RENAN.

the permanent character of much of the subject matter of our "Reply," together with the distinctive variations in style and sentiment which distinguish it from the replies of other authors, render its publication, it is believed, at the present, and indeed at any time, opportune. The general sentiments M. Renan's work inculcates still prevail to a large extent among the various classes of society; and so long, therefore, as these sentiments are known to exist, such productions as a counteractive cannot but be regarded as timely.

The "Life of Jesus," it appears, has had an extensive circulation, and has been introduced through infidel agency into almost every civilized country in the world. Kindred works, also, such as "Darwin," and other productions of an infidel tendency, are being introduced into the public libraries, and are quietly exerting their poisonous influence upon the minds and morals of the people. Hence the urgent call for Christian zeal and effort to check the spreading influence of such infidel productions. Such is the design of the present work. It is non-sectarian in its character, and will, the writer humbly hopes, be recognized by the various denominations of the Christian Church as one of the "helps" referred to by St. Paul,[1] towards meeting the present requirements of the Christian world.

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 28.

Should the writer be judged by some to have been rather severe upon the character of the infidel, he begs to submit to such, that he has not been conscious of any feeling contrary to Christian charity and love—that while the character is condemned and the individual scripturally reproved, he is also sincerely pitied, and his salvation ardently desired. In this, he but follows the example of Christ and His apostles, who were wont to plainly, and in no ambiguous terms, reprove sin in all its diversified forms, and who have exhorted true believers, in all ages of the Church, not to suffer sin to go unrebuked, and to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."

While the author is not without hope relative to the apparently confirmed sceptic, he has written more particularly with a view to assisting the candid inquirer, the thoughtful student, and intelligent young people generally, whose habits of thought, of life, and religious views, have not taken a decided and permanent mould. While a tendency to infidelity exists in the human mind, it is believed that such a work as the present will always be especially useful to the rising generation. Although written in reply to a particular treatise, its chief design, as already remarked, is of a much more general character.

Quotations from M. Renan's work render every remark

and comment in this perfectly intelligible throughout, even to those who have not read his book.

That the work may meet the Divine approval and prove a blessing to the world, has been the single aim and inspiring hope of the

AUTHOR.

August, 1876.

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INTRODUCTION.

SAID an avowed and educated infidel when in conversation with the writer, on the religious state of the world, "Let the final issue be what it may, the majority is against you; and I go with the majority." But while such a species of argument may suffice to satisfy the mind of one who has laboured hard to quench his God-given rationality, to one with sense unimpaired, and judgment unfettered by any untoward influence, this is clearly impossible. If the road to ruin be really broad, and the gate wide, those who resolve with the many to go in thereat, cannot be wise. But unfortunately, as with this gentleman, so with many, it is this (to them) uncertain and unsettled *if*, they would fain pursuade themselves, that is alone answerable for the choice they make. It is to be hoped, however, that the following pages will convince the reader that the *if* is purely fanciful, and that uncertainty in the matter there is none.

To creatures endowed with a moral sense, and placed under inflexible righteous law, all misapprehensions of God's plan of moral government must necessarily be ruinous in their tendency, involving consequences fatal to man's happiness and well-being. If the character of that

Being who stands at the head of the created universe be, as the Bible declares, holy and just, then all departures from the eternal principles of truth and rectitude on the part of free moral agents, must necessarily involve a proportionate amount of misery. And as the further men recede from those principles of truth and practice which constitute "pure and undefiled religion" as unfolded in the Gospel of Christ, He being truly the Messiah, "the sent of God," the more miserable they must ultimately become; so the more closely they adhere to the teaching, and the more nearly they approximate to the character of Him who as "God manifest in the flesh" was a living embodiment of the truth, who as man's Exemplar went about doing good, and who is in Himself a self-sufficient and an inexhaustible source of the purest happiness, the happier they must of necessity become. Happiness in its highest attainable degree the entire family of man would fain enjoy; but the faith and practice of the truly Christian life alone furnish the means and facilities for obtaining this most desirable of ends.

That the plan of salvation as presaged by the Jewish prophets, revealed and unfolded in the New Testament Scriptures, and practically developed among men from the time of Christ to the present, is eminently adapted to meet the spiritual requirements of man in his present state, as well as to prepare him for a higher and a better, no one can, with any show of reason, deny. Man is a guilty creature. Every one who has arrived at the years of consideration, must be aware that both his natural inclination and his practice have been often in direct opposition to his moral sense of what is right and wrong. *Sin*, evinced by the universal disposition in man to

violate the moral order and fitness of things essential to the existence in harmony and love of the intelligent universe, in one form or another, has the dominion over him, and he knows it. He needs deliverance from its guilt, pollution, and power. The Gospel is found to be exactly adapted to meet this want of man's moral nature. It has been tested by multitudes of all ranks and conditions in the different ages of the Church, and has proved to be eminently effective in promoting this end. That the perfect adaptation of the Christian religion to meet the moral and spiritual necessities of man's nature should ever have been called into question, is not easily accounted for except on the ground of its existing corruptions. It certainly could never have arisen from a candid contemplation of the nature and legitimate results of Christianity itself. It must, however, be obvious to every unbiassed mind that pure Christianity cannot, in reason, be held responsible for the intolerance, superstitions, and absurdities, arising from human corruptions of it. But much of the sceptical reasoning of the past as well as of the present century, is based on the preposterous assumption that the Christian religion is responsible for all the evils that have arisen from the false teachings and unholy practices of its professed adherents.

The tendency of the present time towards latitudinarianism, as distinguished from evangelicalism in religious belief, is so great, that every honest endeavour, judiciously put forth, to check its onward and mischievous march, will doubtless be hailed by every true Christian and every ardent lover of the pure and the true, as an effort in the right direction. Christians properly so called,

however, except so far as they may be liable to be drawn away through temptation and the seductions incident to this probationary state, stand in no need of works of this nature; because, being true believers, they have, in the language of an inspired apostle, "the witness in themselves." They have an argument for the truth of Christianity Divinely implanted within, which, so long as it is properly guarded by habitual intercourse with God in prayer, and the faithful discharge of known duty, all the powers of earth and hell can neither gainsay nor remove. "The Spirit itself," the apostle tells us, "beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." Very many there are, therefore, who can say they *know* there is a supreme supernatural intelligence at work among men. There is with them an absolute *certainty* about it. They are certain of it from the *conscious* supernatural change which has been instantaneously effected in their moral and spiritual natures. They can say with John, "We *know* that we have passed from death unto life;" and again, "We know the things that are freely given to us of God *by the Spirit* which He hath given us;" and because, as he further asserts, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One."

Some there doubtless are among God's children who would hesitate to express themselves with so much assurance in relation to their conversion and adoption into His family. Their experience of the new birth has, perhaps, appeared to be more of a gradual work, under the comparatively insensible influence of grace from their childhood upwards. Or their experience, like, perhaps, that of the gentle Lydia of the Gospel, whose heart the Lord opened to receive the soul-quickening word, was

not of so marked a character as to justify such positiveness in reference to a felt supernatural power unmistakably at work upon their souls at the time of their conversion. They did not, as have very many who had previously been intensely exercised under the powerfully convicting influence of the Spirit of God, so suddenly and consciously emerge from a state of fearful darkness, into God's most marvellous light; and from a state of condemnation and impending wrath, to that of conscious forgiveness and justification, accompanied by powerfully and instantaneously inwrought feelings of the most endearing affection, filial love, and adoring gratitude. Such experiences are, however, of common occurrence; nor are they confined to times of general religious awakening, nor to any particular class of persons. But however more or less marked, or whatever the attending circumstances connected with this gracious work of the Spirit, all truly converted persons are conscious from time to time that they have "passed from death unto life," from a state of nature to grace, inasmuch as they feel the love of God to be sweetly shed abroad in their hearts, take a delight in the spiritual and holy exercises of the closet and the sanctuary, and hate and strive against everything unholy and sinful. But others there are who have not yet experienced this "adoption of children," and consequently have no such experimental knowledge of Divine things. They are still enveloped in the darkness of nature's night, and cannot while in this state spiritually apprehend, nor have they by nature any disposition to apprehend the great and saving truths of the Gospel. And from this natural disrelish for the truly spiritual and holy it is, that scepticism as to the truth of the Bible

itself is found to prevail among all classes of society, and even in the midst of enlightened Christian communities. But the salvation of such as these is comprehended in the benign purposes of Jehovah, and it is mainly on their behalf, therefore, that the love and sympathies of Christian writers are enlisted, and find their development in the production of works written in reply to publications which, as the offspring of fallen, degenerate nature, are unhappily directed "against the Lord, and against His Anointed."

Among certain modern philosophers of the rationalistic school, it appears that the evangelical or Gospel plan of salvation, as taught by our Lord and His apostles, is henceforth to be regarded as having run its course and become obsolete. It has had, they say, "its day," has answered very well as a religion for the comparatively unenlightened ages of the past; but it is to be regarded as quite unsuited to the refined literary tastes, and speculative habits of the progressive present. Dismantled and left quite bare of its old robes of Primitive purity, and clothed with a dress more in conformity with the fashionable tastes of a scientific age, it may still be permitted to have a name to live; but as to its existing in a state of old-fashioned orthodoxy, or Divine primitiveness and purity, it is out of the question—to the extreme intellectual sensitiveness of this advanced guard in the car of human progress, the idea seems altogether insufferable. Among the leaders in these schools of fashionable religious novelty, may be mentioned the names of Strauss, in Germany; Newman, in England; Parker, in America; and Renan, in France; all of whose deistical writings, with the exception of those of the last-named, were

brought under critical review in the Evangelical Alliance Prize Essay, entitled, "Infidelity: Its aspects, causes, and agencies;" by the Rev. T. Pearson. Other men of talent and learning in each of these and other countries, have been active coadjutors with these men in their efforts to dispossess the religion of the Gospel of its Divine authority, and with it, of all its intrinsic excellency and power; but their efforts, however apparently successful for a time in furthering the cause of error and sin, must, since they are directed against the Divinity and heaven-sustained purity of God's holy religion, necessarily be futile and without permanent results. Man may *propose*, but God will *dispose*. Such men may propose to overthrow the religion of the Bible, of Christ, and of God; but Omnipotence will prove more than a match for them. The shafts which they aim at the vitals, the religious life of the Church, God, through the instrumentality of His servants, shall hurl back upon themselves with redoubled force, as it ever has been, to their utter confusion and dismay.

These gentlemen have, it appears, no particular objection to the perpetuated existence of a nominal Christianity, provided it be divested of its authoritative ordinances, sacraments, and doctrinal essentials. It may exist, but it must be as a leafless, limbless trunk, and divested of even its life-giving roots. It may still be suffered to have a place among men, but it must be as a disfigured, unauthoritative, inanimate statue, subject always for its continued sustentation in any form to the capricious will of its originator—man. But is it nothing, we might ask those philosophic gentlemen, in proof of its Divine origin, and consequent perfect adaptation to the nature

and circumstances of man in his present state, as well as to qualify him for a higher and a holier, that wherever cordially embraced in its primitive and uncorrupted purity, it is found to be productive of such glorious moral results, as contradistinguished from the results invariably produced in pagan lands by the inculcation of the religious dogmas of Paganism? Proclaimed where and among whatever people, nation, or tribe of mankind it may, it is found to be productive of like blessed results. It transforms, spiritualizes, and elevates alike the polished civilian and the untutored barbarian, the accomplished scholar and the unlettered rustic. It brings peace, love, hope, and celestial joy, alike to the palace of the rich, and the cottage of the poor. It is found to renew the nature and purify the heart alike of sovereign and subject, master and servant, rich and poor, bond and free, implanting in each the graces of humility, mutual dependence and obligation, as well as of that faith, hope, charity, and filial obedience, which are the indubitable characteristics of that moral change which from its radically transforming character clearly evinces the Omnipotence and Divinity of its origin. That the religion of the Gospel has done and is still doing all this for our fallen humanity, is undeniable; it is patent to the living world. Who then will deny that this religion is Divine? Alas! but too many; and hence the necessity for works written with a view to combat the mischievous assaults of its misguided assailants — the false reasoning and charming sophistry of one of whom it is the purpose of the writer to candidly consider and duly expose in the following pages.

MODERN INFIDELITY DISARMED,

IN A

REPLY TO M. RENAN.

CHAPTER I.

AUTHENTICITY AND GENUINENESS OF THE GOSPELS.

TRUE candour and fair argument every one will professedly commend; but unfortunately for the cause of truth, the exercise of these virtues, especially in religious investigations, is by no means so general. An honest, upright mind, however, can afford to be candid, since his sincere desire and steadfast aim are to know and love *the truth*. Honest doubts, on all questions that will admit of doubt, are certainly admissible; so candour and fair argument in order to a rational solution of them, all will acknowledge to be indispensable. But if, for example, we wished to test the credibility of anything contained in the writings of Cicero, Pliny, Tacitus, or any other well-known historical personage, would it not evince a very great lack of candour, would it not be the height of presumption and folly to bring to the consideration of the subject a mind pre-occupied with *a purely speculative*

and FANCIFUL *theory* as to what events did or did not transpire in their day? But this is precisely the state of mind that M. Renan has been pleased to bring to a consideration of the events which are recorded in the Gospels. In writing his work which he presents to the world under the title of "The Life of Jesus," he has steadily adhered to a primary principle as laid down in his introduction, which is to regard as an interpolation, a fictitious creation, or false teaching, everything found in the Gospels that does not accord with his preconceived speculative views; and this he does, as we shall subsequently show, almost invariably without even an attempt at proof. That it partakes of the supernatural, or in some other respect clashes with his philosophy, is, in his estimation, though against every just rule of historical criticism, sufficient to justify such denunciation. His style is: "This or that does not accord with my idea of what *should* be in the Gospels, and therefore I pronounce it unauthentic. This and the other are not in accordance with my creed as a philosopher, and therefore I pronounce them legend." His is, therefore, not the rational mode of approach. He does not approach these sacred oracles—proved to be such by even his own admissions, properly weighed—he does not approach them in the spirit of, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;" but, repudiating even the most overwhelming evidence in proof of their Divine origin, in effect, to the Almighty he says, "Speak thou the things that become sound doctrine!" Presumptuous man! even a child in humble, trusting dependence on the Spirit's aid may understand the Scriptures better than he.

His preferences, in general, are towards the discourses of Matthew, the narratives of Mark, and such portions of

the other Gospels as are to his mind unobjectionable. "On the whole," however, he remarks, "I admit as authentic the four canonical Gospels, and the authors are, generally speaking, those to whom they are attributed."[1] But having previously formed a religious theory and creed for himself, in going over their contents he is determined, in general, to exclude therefrom, or explain away, all that his judgment leads him to pronounce irrational, and in particular, everything that asserts or implies the supernatural; and by thus entirely excluding the Deity from the work, and making it a purely human production, he would, in effect, liberate the conscience from its moral obligation to observe its teaching and obey its precepts. But the man who attempts to exclude the Deity from a work professing in its almost every page to have come from Him, must needs, one would think, have some very rational ground on which to rest his daring attempt. His deductions and conclusions should at least be made to avoid coming into antagonistic collision with the established, manifestly just, and universally recognised principles of historical criticism. But the fact that such principles are virtually ignored by M. Renan, and that he has not advanced even the shadow of a logical argument against the miracles and all that is recorded as partaking of the supernatural in those writings which he himself acknowledges to be authentic, is demonstrative of the groundlessness of his positions, and of the utter hopelessness of the unhallowed cause which he has unfortunately espoused.

Said an inspired Apostle of the Divine Founder of our faith, "*Prove* all things; hold fast that which is good."[2] But in contravention of this sage counsel of one of its first and ablest propagators, as being quite in consonance with the genius of Christianity properly understood, M. Renan

[1] Introduction, p. 21. [2] 1 Thess. v. 21.

thinks with Hume that as to the orthodox Christian belief, "our holy religion is founded in *faith*, not in reason." But if these notable writers had been as far-seeing as they supposed themselves to be, they might have perceived that "our holy religion is founded in *reason* no less than in faith—that, in fact, *faith* invariably implies and includes 'reason.'" Hence, also, the further Scripture counsel—"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you *a reason* of the hope that is in you."[1] If, moreover, we say we believe a thing, whatever it may be, there is always a "because" connected with such belief, thus invariably involving a process of reasoning. We say, *e.g.*, I believe *because* I saw, heard, or felt. I believe *because* the testimony of credible witnesses leave no room for doubt I believe *because* the testimony of reliable history fully justifies such belief. And so, partly on the testimony of authentic and reliable history, and partly on the supernatural effects everywhere produced in the minds, hearts, and lives of men, by the Scriptures, we say, we believe them to be the truth of God; and believing, on such evidence, that God speaks, anything that He reveals. whether in relation to the past or the future, we of course receive as true. Now, in all this there is a ceaseless process of reasoning—logical reasoning; and thus it will be seen that "reason" can never for a moment be logically separated from "faith." Reason of itself, however, is not a sufficient test of all the revelations and manifestations of Divine truth. Reason and faith have each their legitimate domain; God is the Author of both, and sets bounds to each. The domain of faith comprehends many things recorded by the pen of inspiration as historical verities which, to finite minds, are incomprehensible, and may even appear inconsistent with imperfect

[1] 1 Pet. iii. 15.

human reason. This, however, is the necessary consequence of our shortsightedness. Extending beyond the domain of finite reason, faith penetrates the barrier which hides the spiritual world from view, grasps as living realities what human reason cannot fathom, and reposes implicit confidence in the Word which reason assures us is the declaration of the Most High concerning things unseen.

From the latter part of M. Renan's Introduction to "The Life of Jesus," we gather that he is a deserter from the religion of the Cross—or rather, we should say, from the profession of it—and thinks that being once a believer, although now an apostate, he will be all the more acceptable as a writer of Christ's life, and all the more likely to write in accordance with "*sincere history*." I presume, however, that Christ at least would prefer the sincerity and truthfulness of a friend to the all but inevitable gloss and misrepresentation of an enemy, given to the world in justification of his apostacy.

It is an established and Divine truism, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of God." In this, not only those who are usually styled "orthodox," but every observing mind of ordinary intelligence must, I think, concur. How, then, can a man in his natural, unconverted state, be qualified to verify the sacred writings, or distinguish between the inspired and the uninspired; or, as Renan has vainly and presumptuously attempted, between the true and the false, since he altogether discards their claim to inspiration, yet maintains that they contain "eternal truth,"—indirect emanations from the mind of the Deity. Such a work must obviously be referred to religiously competent men—men who have not only intellectual ability, but true spiritual discernment; scholars of acknowledged reputation as God-

fearing, truth-loving men. To men so qualified, by a careful collation and critical examination of ancient Scripture manuscripts and other historic documents, coupled with fervent prayer for the guiding hand of God, whose Almighty Spirit first indited the sacred Oracles,—spurious writings, mistakes of copyists, or any interpolations that may have crept into them by the hands of man, would certainly be more easily discoverable, than to any other class of men. To such men, this most sacred and important work has been committed, and by them our authorised version of the Gospels has long since been pronounced a true and reliable compilation, the canonicity of which is indisputable. Slight errors and discrepancies, introduced through the negligence or inadvertence of transcribers, it may contain; but these are of little or no importance as compared to the doctrinal and saving truths of the Gospel, in respect to which, there having been no various reading in any of the ancient manuscripts, it is universally acknowledged to be perfect.

M. Renan pronounces against certain portions of our received version, not because they are defective in historical authenticity—knowing full well that the passages he declaims against are as well authenticated as the rest—but because the doctrines inculcated are, to his mind, unreasonable, and because the style of some of the remarks ascribed to Jesus are not, in his judgment, in accordance with the style of some of His other addresses; as though it were an unheard-of and an impossible thing in a writer or a speaker to vary in the least, whatever the occasion might be, from his ordinary style of writing or speaking. Claiming, as he does, the freedom of a free-thinker, we must of course accord to M. Renan the right of judgment in the matter;

but we must be permitted to say that he hereby lays himself open to the charge of great inconsistency, inasmuch as the varied style of his own work, and assertions—when it suits his purpose to make them—in reference to Christ's changing His mode of address according to circumstances, are a witness against him.[1]

The inspiring Spirit in revealing to His chosen instruments the truths to be made known, or in directing them in the choice of historical facts to be recorded, and the use they were to make of them, made use of their natural capacities and varied mental constitutions; thus giving rise to the diversities of style, and thought, and modes of expression, which are everywhere apparent in the sacred writings. The idea of a Divine or supernatural inspiration as connected with the production of those sacred books, however, M. Renan utterly rejects; and with all the simplicity of one who had never once heard of such a doctrine, asks in reference to the addresses of our Lord, "Were there stenographers present to fix those fleeting words of Jesus?" To which we shall not be misunderstood if we reply, There was one—He who first uttered them, and who promised that after His ascension the Holy Ghost should be given to His apostles and evangelists to "guide them into all truth, and to bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said unto them." Renan, however, being, as he gives us to understand, a careful reader of the New Testament, has discovered, he thinks, that the evangelists themselves did not even claim to be inspired. But did they not, we might ask, claim to be the apostles of our Lord? And is it not recorded that the inspiring Spirit was poured out upon them on the day of Pentecost? Does the fact, moreover, that the Jewish prophets and writers of the Old Testa-

[1] See his work, pp. 226, 229.

ment did not in so many words assert their inspiration, prove or imply that they were not to be regarded as inspired men? Was not their style simply, "Hear ye the word of the Lord"? And does not this correspond with the style of the Evangelists and the other writers of the New Testament in designating their writings, "the word, the testimony, and the Gospel of Christ and of God, the record which God hath given of His Son," &c.? And if their style of address in this respect is the same, and the prophets of the Old Testament dispensation were declared by Christ and His apostles to be holy men of old who wrote and spoke "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," and that, therefore, whatsoever was written by them concerning Christ, He said must certainly be fulfilled – we may not from the absence, in so many words, of personal claims to inspiration on the part of the evangelists, exhibit, as Renan, our lack of judgment in jumping to the conclusion that they were uninspired men. Paul did not thus directly assert his claim to inspiration, and yet he assures us that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." And that this general declaration in reference to inspiration includes himself and his writings, we may gather from the declaration of another apostle concerning him: "Even as our beloved brother, Paul, also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in *all his epistles*, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned [in the school of Christ] and unstable wrest, as they do also the *other* Scriptures, unto their own destruction."[1] "All" Paul's epistles are here declared to be "Scripture," inasmuch as Peter associated them with it, and declares *them* to contain "some things" which were wrested by the unstable in common with "the *other*

[1] 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.

Scriptures." He also asserts that Paul wrote them by "the wisdom given unto him;" in other words, that he was endowed with the gift of inspiration, although, like the evangelists, he makes no direct allusion to it in his own writings. As a leading teacher in the school of error, M. Renan would do well to ponder the significant exhortation given by Paul to the disciples whose doctrinal views were at this time directly opposed to those of the Renan school: "Beware lest ye also, being *led away by the error of the wicked*, fall from your own steadfastness." The condemnation of the *leaders* in error must be great indeed.

Having premised the foregoing general remarks, we come now more directly to the consideration of M. Renan's observations relative to the Gospels and their authors. "The four personages," Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, in Renan's opinion, "are not strictly given as the authors" of the Gospels at the head of which their names stand. "They merely signify," he says, "that these were the traditions proceeding from each of these apostles, and claiming their authority." It might as well be said that the names of Luther, Calvin, or Renan, placed upon the title page of the works they profess to have written, "are not strictly given as the authors" of those works which come to us in their names. He must have credit, however, in speaking of Matthew and Mark, for the admission (p. 11) that "the two first Gospels bear, not without reason, the name of the Gospel according to Matthew, and of the Gospel according to Mark." He further remarks that "these Gospels present parallel parts so long and so perfectly identical that it must be supposed, either that the final compiler of the first had the second under his eyes, or *vice versa*, or that both copied from the same prototype." The latter, Renan, the latter, I

should say. They both copied from Christ, and they were both helped by the "one and self-same Spirit," and hence the "identity of the parallel parts." A consideration of the fact that even without supernatural guidance, the same circumstances might be mentioned in the same manner by men who retained alike the remembrance of facts or conversations which strongly impressed them, together with the simple admission of the well-established fact of the Divine inspiration of the sacred writers, would have removed this and many other difficulties from Renan's mind. But no, since it involves the supernatural, it must be discarded—his creed, composed of baseless assumptions, will not admit of it.

The industry Renan has exhibited in connection with his work is certainly commendable. He says, "I do not believe I have neglected any source of information as to ancient evidences. Without speaking of a crowd of other scattered data (alluding, doubtless, to the vast Latin collection of Lightfoot, Otho, and others, of which he elsewhere speaks; also to the mass of ancient writings by Christian and heathen authors, which are all to be regarded as collateral evidences of the authenticity of the New Testament Scriptures—besides these, he says) "there remain, respecting Jesus and the time in which He lived, five great collections of writings—1st, The Gospels and the writings of the New Testament in general; 2nd, The compositions called the Apocrypha of the Old Testament; 3rd, The works of Philo; 4th, Those of Josephus; 5th, The Talmud," a Jewish work written by the enemies of Christianity, and containing the mass of writings which had been accumulating in the Jewish schools for generations. As the result of such laborious researches, M. Renan is now prepared to say:—"On the

whole, I admit as authentic the four Canonical Gospels. All, in my opinion, date from the first century, and the authors are, generally speaking, those to whom they are attributed. Matthew evidently merits an unlimited confidence as to the discourses; they are the *Logia*, the identical notes taken from a clear and lively remembrance of the teachings of Jesus. Mark is full of minute observations, coming doubtless from an eye-witness. The facts are related with a clearness for which we seek in vain amongst the other Evangelists. He is the one of the three synoptists who has remained the most primitive, the most original, the one to whom the fewest after elements have been added. The Gospel of Luke is a regular composition, founded on anterior documents. Luke had probably under his eyes the biographical collection of Mark and the Logia of Matthew." Whether this be the case or not, Luke records many things that are not found in either of the other Gospels, "having," as he says, "had perfect understanding of all things from the very first." "He interprets the documents," Renan continues, "according to his own idea; he has not the absolute impassibility of Matthew and Mark. The author of this Gospel is certainly the same as that of the Acts of the Apostles. The date of it can be determined with much precision by considerations drawn from the book itself. But if the Gospel of Luke is dated, those of Matthew and Mark are dated also; for it is certain that the third Gospel is posterior to the first two, and exhibits the character of a much more advanced compilation. We have besides on this point an excellent testimony from a writer of the first half of the second century—namely, Papias, who was all his life seeking to collect whatever could be known of the person of Jesus." Of John's Gospel, he says: "That it represents

to us a version of the life of the Master, worthy of high esteem, and often to be preferred, is demonstrated in a manner which leaves us nothing to be desired, both by exterior evidences and by examination of the document itself. No one doubts that, towards the year 150, the fourth Gospel did exist, and was attributed to John. Explicit texts from St. Justin, from Anthenagorus, from Tatian, from Theophilus of Antioch, from Irenæus, show that thenceforth this Gospel mixed in every controversy, and served as a corner-stone for the development of the faith. Irenæus is explicit; now Irenæus came from the school of John, and between him and the Apostle there was only Polycarp. Let us add that the first Epistle attributed to St. John is certainly by the same author as the fourth Gospel; now this epistle is recognised as from John by Polycarp, Papias, and Irenæus. But it is above all, the perusal of the work itself which is calculated to give this impression. The author always speaks as an eye-witness; he wishes to pass for the Apostle John. If, then, this work is not really by the Apostle, we must admit a fraud of which the author convicts himself. Now, although the ideas of the time respecting literary honesty differed essentially from ours, there is no example in the apostolic world of a falsehood of this kind. [Nor of any other "kind," Renan, although your creed has frequently led you to endeavour to convict them of it.] Besides, not only does the author wish to pass for the Apostle John, but we see clearly that he writes in the interest of this Apostle. On each page [this is an exaggeration] he betrays his desire to fortify his authority and show that he has been the favourite of Jesus."

Now these important concessions, which I have collected from different parts of M. Renan's Introduction, are forced

from him by the overwhelming weight of the historic evidence to which he has had access; and had he candidly framed his religious theory and doctrinal creed in rational accordance with these admissions, and with others which he elsewhere makes, he would have proved himself a friend instead of an enemy, to the best of causes, and to humanity. But it appears to be in the nature of some, chameleon-like, to quickly change their colour; instead of steadfastly serving his generation as a white-robed angel of light, he suddenly changes to the midnight hue of the child of darkness; and these fits of transformation, judging from his apostacy and the extremely discordant sentiments frequently expressed in his work, are, we should say, a marked characteristic of the man.

It will be seen from the quotations given above, that Renan does not attempt to call into question the historical authenticity of the Gospels, knowing, as he does, that they rest on too solid and immovable a foundation—that of ancient manuscripts, versions, and references to, and extensive quotations from the Scriptures found in the writings of both Christian and heathen authors, dating back even as early as the first century, and the times of the Apostles themselves. But although he cannot call into question their general authenticity, he endeavours by every means in his power to undermine their authority. No sooner has he made the admissions referred to above, than he, in effect, recalls them by an unscrupulous and unsparing application of his most unrighteous and unphilosophic principles of historic criticism: "That the Gospels are in part legendary," he says, "is evident, since they are full of miracles and of the supernatural."[1] Mark well his philosophic reason for pronouncing them "legendary."

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Equally rational and satisfactory is the following: "There was no scruple," he says, "in inserting additions, in variously combining them, and in completing some by others. The poor man who has but one book wishes that it may contain all that is dear to his heart. These little books were lent, each one transcribed in the margin of his copy the words and the parables he found elsewhere, which touched him. The most beautiful thing in the world has thus proceeded from an obscure and purely popular elaboration." Renan gives no authority for making this assertion, and has none, or he would have given it, according to his rule, which he assures us he never departs from. The assertion is therefore perfectly gratuitous and baseless. Had he expressed himself conjecturally, it would certainly not have been so repulsive to our sense of propriety, in respect to a matter so sacred and important; but even then it would have been most unreasonable, for each and all of the sacred writings certainly contain much that was at least calculated to engender such "scruples." They all profess to contain the holy, unvarying, unvarnished truth of God Himself. Paul, whose writings were dispersed among the Christian Churches during his life, declared that "his Gospel was not from man," and that "*all* Scripture is given by inspiration of God;" and those who possessed the book of Revelation must have been held in check, one would think, by the awful curse pronounced against those who should presume to add to or take from the Word of God.

But scruple, or no scruple, what sufficient motive could they have had for all this transcribing, adding, combining, completing, etc., that Renan speaks of as having been done by even the "poor" people? Suppose they really had no scruple about adding to, altering, and in various ways tam-

[1] Page 12.

pering with the sacred work of those men whom they revered and looked up to as the inspired Apostles of Christ, if, as Renan says,[1] they were all at this time, as they had been taught, looking for the immediate end of the world, what possible motive could they have for all this painstaking in order to their each possessing a copy of the Gospel perfected according to his own mind? Feeling the force of this position, singularly enough by some process of mental infatuation, he even confounds himself on this very page by saying, "As men still believed that the world was nearly at an end, they cared little to compose books for the future; it was sufficient to preserve merely in their hearts a lively image of Him whom they hoped soon to see again in the clouds." Absurd, in the first instance, to suppose that the Gospels would have been written at all, had such been the Apostles' belief, the absurdity is but increased and rendered the more conspicuous in supposing that the people, who, according to Renan's theory of interpretation, were daily expecting the appearance of their Lord in the clouds, and the end of the world, should, nevertheless, put themselves to the trouble of "collating, copying, variously combining, elaborating, and completing" those Gospels. But leaving such inconceivable inconsistency out of the question, it being nowhere else to be found than in the brain of M. Renan —as to the assumption, which he, in another place, softens down to "It appears *most likely* that we have not the entirely original compilations of either Matthew or of Mark; but that our first two Gospels are versions in which the attempt is made to fill up the gaps of the one text by the other," the books as they have come down to us speak for themselves. There is no indication in them of their having been thus assimilated. They are not only not identical, but in

[1] Page 12.

many respects are quite distinct, one omitting what the other supplies, and *vice versa*, both as to the narrative of facts, and the record of Christ's discourses: variations they contain that are utterly irreconcilable with the assumption that a general assimilation of the two has been unscrupulously attempted.

Allow me to further observe, that the Church, which was the Divinely appointed repository of God's Word, cannot be supposed to have allowed the unhallowed and unscrupulous tampering with it, of which Renan speaks. Bishops and elders were appointed to preside over the Churches and overlook such things from the time that the Gospels and the other Scriptures were first written; and it is well-known that the orthodox Churches, from the time of the Apostles and onwards, zealously and "earnestly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints." As, therefore, they were thus by Divine and Apostolic appointment entrusted with the charge of the Holy Books, so they are to be regarded as not only the lawful defenders of the faith, but the safeguards of the purity and integrity of the sacred text.

That the Churches and followers of Christ had become very numerous and widely spread, even in Apostolic times, may be gathered not only from Scripture history itself, but from the writings of heathen as well as Christian authors. Tacitus, a Roman historian, who was born about A.D. 56, in giving an account of the persecution of the Christians under Nero, about thirty years after the Crucifixion, styles them "a set of people called Christians," and says that "The founder of that name was Christ, who suffered death in the reign of Tiberius, under his procurator, Pontius Pilate." He further says, after referring to the cruel punishments inflicted upon the Christians by the emperor: "This

hurtful superstition thus checked for a time, broke out again and spread not only over Judea, where the evil originated, but through Rome also, to which everything bad finds its way, and in which it is practised." [1]

Suetonius, another Roman historian, contemporary with Tacitus, speaks of their persecution in a similar strain, calling it a "punishment," and says that "the Christians were a set of men of a new and evil superstition." [2]

Pliny the Younger, also, who was Proconsul of Pontus and Bithynia, a writer of the first century, and who died A.D. 115, in an official letter to the Emperor Trajan, writes of the Christians, that they were "many of every age, and of both sexes. Nor has the contagion prevailed among cities only, but among villages and country districts. . . . I take the liberty," he says to the Emperor, "to give you an account of every difficulty that arises to me: I have never been present at the examinations of the Christians; for which reason I know not what questions have been put to them, nor in what manner they have been punished. My behaviour towards those who have been accused to me, has been this: I have interrogated them, in order to know whether they were really Christians. When they have confessed it, I have repeated the same question two or three times, threatening them with death if they did not renounce this religion. Those who have persisted in their confession, have been by my order led to punishment. . . These persons declare that their whole crime, if they are guilty, consists in this: that on certain days they assemble before sunrise to sing alternately the praises of Christ, as of God; and to oblige themselves, by the performance of their religious rites, not to be guilty of theft or adultery, to observe inviolably their word, and to be true to their trust. This disposi-

[1] Tacitus Ann. xv. 44. [2] Suetonius, Nero, c. 16.

tion has obliged me to endeavour to inform myself still further of this matter, by putting to the torture two of their women servants, whom they call deaconesses; but I could learn nothing more from them than that the superstition of these people is as ridiculous as their attachment to it is astonishing."[1] Their worshipping Jesus Christ as God, we may here remark, was contrary to one of the most ancient laws of the Roman Empire, which expressly forbade the acknowledging of any god, which had not been approved of by the Senate. But, "notwithstanding the violent opposition made to the establishment of the Christian religion, it gained ground daily, and very soon made surprising progress in the Roman Empire. In the third century, there were Christians in the senate, in the camp, in the palace; in short, everywhere but in the temples and the theatres; they filled the towns, the country, and the islands. Men and women of all ages and conditions, and even those of the first dignities, embraced the faith; insomuch that the pagans complained that the revenues of their temples were ruined. They were in such great numbers in the empire, that (as Tertullian expresses it) were they to have retired into another country, they would have left the Romans only a frightful solitude."

Just as the Jews, wherever dispersed, carried with them copies of the Law and the Prophets, so did the early Christians carry with them copies—authorised copies, doubtless made with scrupulous exactness, and hence regarded as equally valuable with the original—of the Gospels, and of the other books of Scripture; and from these, extensive and exceedingly numerous quotations were made during the first three centuries, by Christian and heathen writers in the course of their religious controversies.

Numerous commentaries on the New Testament Scrip-

[1] See "Christianity and Positivism," by Dr. McCosh.

tures, harmonies of their contents, and catalogues of them, similar to those found in modern authors, were also early written—some as early as the second and third centuries—by Theophilus of Antioch, Tatian, Origen, and many others.

For the information of the general reader, we may further remark, that many hundred ancient manuscript copies of the New Testament Scriptures have been collected and preserved in the British Museum, the Borgian Museum, the Royal Library, Paris; the University Library, Sweden; the Dresden, Ingolstad, Leyden, Bodleian, and in other celebrated libraries; that numbers of these manuscripts are still to be found in those places; and others, known to have existed till within a late period, served, ere they disappeared, as exemplars from which others were taken; that while some of them, in Greek, were written about A.D. 400, others, as the Syriac and Latin, bear a much earlier date, being written in the early part of the second century; and that these manuscript copies, which were originally taken from the writings of the Apostles, correspond, in all points of fact and doctrine, with our own Scriptures.[1]

By a continued miracle there is no doubt that even the autograph writings of the Apostles might have been preserved; but, however desirable this might have been, such is human nature, that had they been thus preserved, they would probably have been idolised and made a bad and superstitious use of, as it is well-known that relics less sacred have been. At all events, it is certain that for some good and wise reason, God suffered them to disappear, probably through the operation of the natural law that the frequent use of a thing soon destroys it. That the original writings of the Apostles were much used by the Churches among whom

[1] See "American Religious Encyclopedia," and Dr. Plumer on "The Bible True."

they were distributed, there can be no doubt. Sufficient, however, that we have all that an Almighty Superintending Providence deemed necessary—copies from the original preserved and handed down to us; and through which we may all, if we will, be made wise unto salvation, and become children of God, through faith in Him "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Speaking of the *various readings* of the ancient manuscripts, the "American Religious Encyclopedia" says: "Comparatively few are of any importance to the sense of the passages in which they occur. The very worst manuscript that is known to exist contains every doctrine of faith, every precept of morality, and every essential fact and circumstance of history, that is to be found in the best. The variations are more in letters than in words; and even where the words differ, it is more in sound than in sense." And, referring to the same subject, Dr. Adam Clarke says: "The reader must not imagine that in the manuscripts and versions which contain the whole of the sacred text, there is any essential defect in matters that relate to the faith and practice, and consequently, to the salvation of the Christian. There is no such manuscript, there is no such version. So has the Divine Providence ordered it, that not one essential truth of God has been injured or suppressed. In this respect all is perfect."[1]

But even though we had no manuscript copies of the Scriptures, either in the original tongue, or from ancient translations, so numerous were the quotations made from them by writers at different times and for different purposes, some friendly, some hostile, that they might be gathered, as Dr. Plumer remarks, from books, still extant, which were written within three hundred years of the Ascension of our

[1] "Dr. Clarke's Commentary," Introduction.

Lord. Happily, however, in the providence of God, we are not dependent on such sources for our knowledge of the Gospel; but these very numerous and substantially agreeing quotations, dating, as many of them do, close upon Apostolic times, should, nevertheless, be regarded as strongly confirmatory of the argument for the genuineness and authenticity of the sacred writings.

Like the works of Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian, heathen writers who flourished, respectively, in the second, third, and fourth centuries, and wrote against the Christian religion, quoting largely from the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles, and thereby undesignedly furnishing important testimony to the truth and authenticity of the books of the New Testament, which have come down to us in the names of their authors, respectively, as quoted by these heathen writers; like the infidel works of these men, it is a consolation to the true believer to know that those of M. Renan and his rationalistic coadjutors, will but tend in the end to further the cause of the true religion of Christ, by their having provoked from various writers, living in different parts of the world, replies which expose the shallowness of their arguments, and the remarkable weakness of their sophistical reasonings.

Tertullian wrote five books against the famous heretic Marcion, who figured between A.D. 130 and 160, but there is nothing in them indicating that in their day the Gospels were suspected to be of uncertain date and authorship, as they have been represented to be, by the enemies of the truth, in the present day. The books also, of the heathen philosopher Celsus,[1] were answered by the celebrated Origen, who

[1] The testimonies furnished by Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian, heathen writers against Christianity, "prove that neither Celsus in the second, Porphyry in the third, nor Julian in the fourth century, suspected the authenticity of these books, or even insinuated that Christians were

wrote in the early part of the third century, the date of his birth being A.D. 185, and of his death A.D. 253. This distinguished Father, whose extensive biblical knowledge highly qualified him to form a correct judgment in reference to the canon of Scripture, has furnished us also with a catalogue of the books of the New Testament, as recognised by the Church, in that early day. It is true that the names of two books (James and Jude) are omitted in his catalogue, as transmitted to us, but the omission is evidently an accident, for in other parts of his writings, he acknowledges these Epistles as a part of the canon. And in his enumeration of the books, none are included but those which are in the present canon, "which proves," as a writer in the "American Religious Encyclopedia," remarks, "that in his time the canon was well settled among the learned, and that the distinction between inspired writings and human compositions was as clearly marked as at any subsequent period."

About a century afterwards, catalogues of the sacred books were published by Eusebius and Athanasius, both including all the books in our present canon, and no others; and of which Athanasius says, "In these alone the doctrine of religion is taught; let no man add to them, or take anything from them."

Speaking of the reverence with which the Jews had been taught to regard their sacred writings, Dr. Paley remarks: "According to the statements of Philo and Josephus, they would suffer any torments, and even death itself, rather

mistaken in the authors to whom they ascribed them. Not one of them expressed an opinion upon this subject different from that which is holden by Christians. And when we consider how much it would have availed them to cast a doubt upon this point, if they could, and how ready they showed themselves to take every advantage in their power, and that they were men of learning and inquiry, their concession, or rather their suffrage upon the subject, is extremely valuable."

than change a single point or iota of the Scriptures. A law was also enacted by them, which denounced him to be guilty of inexpiable sin, who should presume to make the slightest possible alteration in their sacred books." To which we may add, so careful were they to correctly preserve the sacred text, that when a copy was made out, not only the number of words, but even the number of letters in it was counted, and compared with the original in order to prevent mistakes.

The "popular elaborations" of the Gospels and unscrupulous tampering with them, of which M. Renan speaks, could not possibly have been made without immediate detection and exposure; for not only were there copies of the New Testament Scriptures "dispersed before the death of their authors among the different communities of Christians who were scattered throughout the then known world, but in all the churches—some of which were formed in the principal cities of the Roman empire within twenty years of the ascension—the books of the New Testament, especially the four Gospels, were read as a part of their public worship, just as the writings of Moses and the Prophets were read in the Jewish synagogues. Moreover, we have an unbroken series of testimonies for the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament, which can be traced backwards to the very time of the Apostles: and these testimonies are equally applicable to prove its uncorrupted preservation."[1]

"The agreement of the ancient versions and quotations from the New Testament which are made in the writings of the Christians of the first three centuries, and in those of the succeeding fathers of the Church, and from which (as has been frequently observed) the whole body of the

[1] Paley.

Gospels and Epistles might be compiled, is another irrefragable argument of the purity and integrity with which the New Testament has been preserved."[1]

"These sacred records being universally regarded as the supreme standard of truth, were received by every class of Christians with peculiar respect, as being divine compositions, and possessing an authority belonging to no other books. Whatever controversies, therefore, arose among different sects, the Scriptures of the New Testament were received and appealed to by every one of them, as being conclusive in all matters of controversy: consequently it was morally impossible, that any man or body of men should corrupt or falsify them in any fundamental article, should foist into them a single expression to favour their peculiar tenets, or erase a single sentence, without being detected by thousands."[2]

A single passage, among many, from Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, may serve to confirm the foregoing statements in reference to all the primitive sects appealing, from the first, to the one common standard of truth, the New Testament Scriptures. In the treatise which he wrote and published in the second century "Against Heresies" are these words: "So firm is the ground upon which these Gospels rest, that the very heretics themselves bear witness to them, and starting from these, each one of them endeavours to establish his own peculiar doctrine." He also speaks of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as the universally acknowledged authors of the four Gospels, and says of them: "It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are."[3]

[1] Horne.

[2] See Watson's "Institute," Paley's "Evidences," and Horne's "Credibility."

[3] Irenæus, Book III. xi. 7.

That Irenæus, who was by birth a Greek, was in a position to certainly form a correct judgment of these matters, is evident from some remarks, as quoted from his writings by Eusebius, which he addressed to a former friend who had embraced the tenets of the Gnostics:—"These opinions, those presbyters who preceded us, and who were conversant with the apostles, did not hand down to thee. For, while I was yet a boy, I saw thee in lower Asia with Polycarp, distinguishing thyself in the royal court, and endeavouring to gain his approbation. . . . I can even describe the place where the blessed Polycarp used to sit and discourse, his going out, too, and his coming in; his general mode of life and personal appearance, together with the discourses which he delivered to the people; also how he would speak of his familiar intercourse with John, and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord; and how he would call their words to remembrance. Whatsoever things he had heard from them respecting the Lord, both with regard to His miracles and His teaching, Polycarp, having thus received information from the eye-witnesses of the Word of Life, would recount them all in harmony with the Scriptures."[1] Here we have proof that the four Gospels and the other books of the New Testament, of which he elsewhere speaks, were recognized as "the Scriptures," not only by Irenæus himself, who was separated by but one link from the Apostles, but also by Polycarp, who had been conversant "with John and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord," and who afterwards recounted what he had heard from them before public assemblies, and "in harmony with *the Scriptures*"—the then existing Scriptures, as known and described by Irenæus.

[1] Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. v. 20.

These Scriptures, then, including the four Gospels which Irenæus, and therefore Polycarp, ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, could not have been originated and palmed upon the world in the names of the Apostles and Evangelists at a later date, as some modern "rationalists" have most unreasonably conjectured. The great work of Irenæus is still extant, and from his day to the present the sacred writings have been recognized and preserved with jealous care by the Church: their genuineness and authenticity are therefore indisputable; and the legendary additions of which Renan speaks, have thus been most effectually provided against. Although not at all essential to the argument, we may further add—which will probably be regarded by some as an important consideration—that as the Samaritans and ancient Israelites were to each other in reference to preserving from alteration the sacred text of the Pentateuch, which they each possessed; so did the Gnostic heretics and the orthodox Christians, in their doctrinal disputes, act from the earliest age of the Church, as a mutual guard to the sacred text of the New Testament Scriptures. One doctrinal party could not have materially altered the original text without immediate detection by the jealous eye of the other. But it is evident that while good, Christian men may have exercised a holy jealousy in this respect, they themselves needed no such check.

The letters of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, written to some of the Christian Churches a little before his martyrdom at Rome, and which bear testimony to the truth of the religion of the Gospel, are still extant. Now this Bishop was educated under the apostle John, and was intimately acquainted in early life with St. Peter and St. Paul, and afterwards with Polycarp. He was Bishop of Antioch for

upwards of forty years, extending from about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem to the early part of the second century. He and Polycarp may therefore be regarded as connecting links between the Apostles of our Lord and the subsequent Fathers of the Church. They both died as martyrs. The venerable Ignatius nobly despising the sentence of death by wild beasts which had been passed upon him, exclaimed: "I thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast condescended to honor me with Thy love, and hast thought me worthy, with Thy apostle Paul, to be bound in iron chains." And in a letter to the Christian Church at Rome, he said: "Now I begin to be a disciple; nor shall anything move me, whether visible or invisible, that I may attain to Christ Jesus. I would rather die for Jesus Christ, than rule to the utmost ends of the earth. Him I seek who died for us; Him I desire that rose again for us." The venerable Polycarp, who was for more than eighty years pastor of the Church of Smyrna, and who expired at the stake, A.D. 166, on being urged by the proconsul to blaspheme Christ, answered, "Eighty-six years have I served Him, during all which time He never did me injury; how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour." When further urged, his answer was, "I am a Christian!" When threatened with wild beasts, he said, "Bring them forth." When with fire, he reminded them of the eternal fire that awaited the ungodly. Thus did they, with the noble army of apostolic and primitive martyrs, seal their testimony to the truth of the religion of the cross with their blood; and in this we have another irrefragable argument for the truth of Christianity and the authenticity of the New Testament Scriptures; for these men were not mere blind enthusiasts, but men of strong minds, good sense and discernment, as

were the Apostles who had sealed their testimony with their blood before them.

To what has been already said in proof of the antiquity and genuine authorship of John's Gospel, much more might be added, such as the well-known fact that it not only existed before the close of the first century, but that quotations were made from it by very early writers; as, for example, the quotations made from John as a Scripture authority by Justin Martyr (A.D. 138,) relative to the doctrine of the new birth,[1] which proves that this Gospel must not only have existed, but must have been accepted as canonical by the Christian world at the time the quotation was made, and for some time before it. Also the reference made by Irenæus[2] in the concluding chapter of his work "Against Heresies," to the elders or presbyters that preceded him, as having quoted John xiv. 2 in support of their opinions in reference to the future state—a quotation that must have been made immediately after the close of the first century, as Irenæus himself was born not later than the year 140, and some of the "elders" that preceded him must, as were Polycarp and Papias, have been cotemporary with the apostle John himself. These last named, in fact, are the very elders Irenæus refers to as having quoted from John, as they did also from the other Gospels. But enough has been already adduced to prove that John's Gospel is quite as much entitled to a place in the sacred canon as either of the others, as Origen and the other Fathers of the Church, with Irenæus and therefore Polycarp, the disciple of John, and hence John himself, has indisputably given it.

It has thus been made to clearly appear from the writings

[1] Apol. I. 61. The quotation is made from Jn. iii. 3, 5.

[2] Irenæus was in early life a disciple of the venerable Polycarp, by whom he was sent to preach the Gospel to the Gauls.

of the Christian Fathers, as well as from references to the writings of heathen authors, that the Gospels, not excepting the last, with the other books of the New Testament, were recognized from the very first as of Apostolic origin; and thus, therefore, was the palming of a forgery or spurious Gospel upon the world in the name of either of the Apostles or Evangelists, at any period of the Church's history, rendered impossible. Polycarp, Papias, Justin, Irenæus, the immediately succeeding, and all the subsequent Fathers of the Church, were, in the providence of God, successively raised up to act as the conservators of His truth, and served as an effective guarantee to all successive generations of Christians, that the sacred books of the New Testament are the authentic, genuine, and uncorrupted productions of the inspired authors whose names they bear.

CHAPTER II.

The Character of the Evangelists—Discrepancies and Coincidences of the Gospels.

THE unimpeachable character of the Evangelists for truthfulness, integrity, and general holiness, as required by the high standard of the Gospel itself which they preached, is attested by the fact that Christ Himself made them His intimate friends and followers, appointed some of them to the Apostleship, and intimated prophetically that they should sustain this character to the end, inasmuch as they, with the others, should become actual inhabitants of heaven, "sitting upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The fact of their undoubted holiness and uprightness of character, as thus sealed by the Son of God Himself, however, does not satisfy M. Renan; for not only has he charged the early, uninspired disciples and primitive Christians generally with a wholesale, unscrupulous tampering with the Word of God, but the Evangelists themselves are charged with a want of good faith and veracity in the accounts they have given of some of the sayings of Jesus, and of the incidents they have recorded as connected with His life. Such passages as the following, for example, may be found interspersed here and there throughout his work: "Certainly, I think, that if we except certain short and almost mnemonic axioms, none of the discourses reported by Matthew are textual." This

particular passage, however, he does not appear to give as an impeachment of Matthew's integrity; but rather, that it was the necessary result of his having, in his early day, lacked the advantages of a "stenographic reporter!" Perhaps the Supreme Author of all science and art lacked these or other necessary advantages, also—lacked, at least the ability to write in stenographic or other intelligible characters such discourses on the tablets of the Apostles' memories; or to re-write them in case time and circumstances had erased them—but perhaps not, Renan.

"It is scarcely necesssary to say," he further remarks, "that with such documents, in order to present only what is indisputable, we must limit ourselves to general features." Has M. Renan really presented "only what is *indisputable?*" Perhaps he thinks so!—But let us hear him out: "In almost all ancient histories, even in those which are *much less legendary than these*, details open up innumerable doubts. *Many anecdotes were conceived* to prove that in Jesus the prophecies regarded as Messianic had had their accomplishments. Several narratives, especially in Luke, *are invented* in order to bring out more vividly certain traits of the character of Jesus."[1] How does Renan reconcile this last most unwarrantable and mischievous assumption, with a statement he has made on page 9 respecting Luke's Gospel?—"We are here then *upon solid ground*; for we are concerned with a work written entirely by the same hand, and of the most perfect unity." Very "solid ground" truly, if we have nothing better to rest upon than the fabrications and inventions of men, palmed upon us in the name of the Most High! M. Renan has not yet disposed of Luke, however. Like an instrument in full play, being set to the tune of false accusation and calumny, he is determined to

[1] pp. 26-27.

play it out, and proceeds: "We feel that we have to do with a man who exaggerates the marvellous, and who labours at the texts (of Matthew and Mark) and wrests their sense to make them agree." He gives him credit, however, for relating "certain words of Jesus of delightful beauty," but in which, he says, "we detect the presence of legend." Credit also is given him for bringing to his Gospel "a degree of skill in composition which singularly augments the effect of the portrait, without seriously injuring its truthfulness." Now St. Luke, if alive, would perhaps consider himself under great obligation to the kind consideration of our French philosopher in thus ascribing to him such good motives for his untruthfulness; but for our own part, we should experience a difficulty in regarding it as complimentary, even though it had proceeded from a philosopher of still higher repute.

Of the apostle John, that remarkably holy man whom Jesus specially loved, M. Renan writes, we should say, in the style of a charlatan rather than a philosopher. As to one of the leading motives which actuated that holy man in writing his gospel, he says:—"*We are tempted* to believe that John in his old age, having read the Gospel narratives, was hurt at seeing that there was not accorded to him a sufficiently high place in the history of Christ; that then he commenced to dictate a number of things which he knew better than the rest, with the intention of showing that in many instances, in which only Peter was spoken of, he had figured with him and even before him."[2] Renan is "*tempted* to believe" on more points than one; and in this instance, at least, it is not hard to discern who is his *tempter*. John's real object in writing his Gospel as given by himself in

[1] Page 24. [2] Page 15.

chapter 20, v. 31, is shown to be threefold; "To prove, 1. That Jesus is the promised Messiah; 2. That His person is truly Divine; and, 3. That eternal life may be obtained through faith in His Name."

In singular contrast (which is an undeviating characteristic of Renan's style of writing) with his sentiments respecting John as quoted in the preceding chapter, Renan proceeds: "When old he wrote that strange Gospel which contains such precious teachings, but in which in our opinion the character of Jesus is falsified upon many points.[1] How is it that, connected with a general plan of the life of Jesus, which appears much more satisfactory and exact than that of the synoptics, these singular passages occur in which *we* are sensible of a dogmatic interest peculiar to the compiler, of ideas foreign to Jesus, and sometimes of indications which place us on our guard against the good faith of the narrator?"[2] Stripped of their coloured surroundings, on other pages he proceeds in the same style:—"The discourses given us by the fourth Gospel are compositions intended to cover with the authority of Jesus certain doctrines dear to the compiler.[3] The style of the discourses attributed to Jesus by the fourth Gospel, presents the most complete analogy with that of the Epistles of St. John. *We* see that in writing the discourses, the author followed not his recollection, but rather the somewhat monotonous movement of his own thought."[4] The writing of a book does not destroy men's individuality, Renan; and each evangelist therefore has a style peculiar to himself.[5] "In attributing these new ideas to Jesus," proceeds John's detractor, "he only followed a *very natural* tendency.

[1] Page 130. [2] Page 13. [3] Page 17. [4] Page 20.
[5] See last paragraph on Page 12.

Considering Jesus as the incarnation of truth, John could not fail to attribute to Him that which he had come to consider as the truth."[1] Base insinuations!—What a reflection upon the character of the man who makes them!—How "very natural" the "tendency" in some to ascribe to others the depraved traits which are characteristic of themselves. What gives Renan so much uneasiness about certain parts of John's Gospel, is evidently the "strange modifications" he professes to have discovered in it; "the perpetual argumentation" of which he speaks; "these long arguments after each miracle," so uncongenial to "the man of taste"—the sentimentalist; together with what he calls "the barrenness of metaphysics, and the darkness of abstract dogma," embracing the nature of the Godhead, the Divinity of Christ, &c. These are the peculiarities of this Gospel which give him so much uneasiness and trouble. Such "argumentation" bears heavily on the various articles of the proud man's creed, and he winces, impatiently winces under the galling pressure. "Is it indeed," he asks in amazement, "John, the Son of Zebedee, who is able to write in Greek these lessons of abstract metaphysics? For myself, I dare not be sure that the fourth Gospel has been entirely written by the pen of a Galilean fisherman." The lessons of "abstract metaphysics" John's Gospel contains, Renan thinks beyond the compass of the fisherman's abilities. It puzzles him, and well it might; but it becomes easy of comprehension to those who consider that it was not beyond the capacity of the God that inspired him. Renan forgets the classical and philosophic training John got on the day of Pentecost, and subsequently.

[1] Page 18.

The "germs of theology," &c., that he complainingly speaks of as being in "the discourses which the fourth Gospel attributes to Jesus," does not prevent him from quoting John as often as it suits his purpose to do so. As he has himself intimated, he frequently gives him the preference to what he calls "the three synoptic Gospels." We will here, however, give a specimen of his manner of dealing with such quotations from John. It clearly indicates the defective judgment of the man who is determined to make everything bend to his scheme. Quoting from John in reference to Christ's having "formed some valuable friendships," he gives as authentic history that, "very early he attracted the attention of a certain Nicodemus, a rich Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrim, and a man occupying a high position in Jerusalem. This man, who appears to have been upright and sincere, felt himself attracted towards the young Galilean. Not wishing to compromise himself, he came to see Jesus by night, and had a long conversation with Him. He doubtless preserved a very favourable impression of Him, for afterwards he defended Jesus against the prejudices of His colleagues." To this narrative which Renan gives as authentic, he adds in a note[1] referring to the conversation between our Lord and Nicodemus:—"We are certainly free to believe that the exact text of the conversation is but *a creation of John's*." In other words, liberty must be conceded M. Renan to select and prune from the narrative according as it may best suit him in the accomplishment of his most unreasonable and unholy purpose, as he has also done in other of John's narrations. That this is his meaning and design here might be confirmed by many passages from his

[1] Page 167.

work, but one may suffice :—"All these discourses," he says, "bear too strongly the imprint of the style peculiar to John for them to be regarded as exact. The anecdote related in chapter six of the fourth Gospel, cannot, however, be *entirely* stripped of historical reality."[1] But by what possible rule of reason or right, I would ask, may he accept one part of the narrative of our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus as true history, and regard the other as false—the one as veritable facts; and the other a fictitious "creation of John's"? It is perfect nonsense. The secret, as in all similar cases, is this :—A portion of the narrative clashes with his creed; it involves the supernatural—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This is the distasteful part; this is the sentiment that his proud heart, his haughty spirit, cannot brook.

At one time, comparing John's Gospel with the "synoptics," unfavourably to the former, he says, "Between these two authorities no critic can ever hesitate;[2] at another, unfavourably to the latter, imagining that John helps him to the proof of a point, he unhesitatingly affirms that John's narrative of this portion has a greater authority."[3] The conversation of Jesus with the woman at the well as related in John 4, suits him, because, he says, "the anecdote certainly represents one of the most intimate thoughts of Jesus, and the greater part of the circumstances have a striking appearance of truth. . . The day on which he uttered this saying, he was truly Son of God."[4] In his rejecting particular passages solely because they interfere with the general religious theory which he has invented for himself—well knowing that they are quite as well authen-

[1] Page 215. [2] Page 16. Page 265—note. [4] Page 176.

ticated as other passages that he receives—we recognize a practical exemplification of one of his favourite principles, and one which he dares to apply to the holy Jesus:—"To conceive the good, in fact," he says, "is not sufficient; it must be made to succeed amongst men. To accomplish this, less pure paths must be followed."[1] Renan thinks he has conceived a good theory of religion; but this is not enough; "it must be made to succeed among men," and to accomplish this, "less pure paths must be followed." The influence of Christ's name in the present state of society is essential to its success; if by any means possible therefore, Jesus must be made to give it His sanction, or at least, not to so pointedly condemn it—right or wrong, true or false, it must if possible be backed by the influence of His name; and if the apostles, His biographers, make Him speak otherwise, they must be silenced and made to give place to His 19th century biographer, who is, of course, a more competent person, and withal furnished with more authentic information respecting Him than they were!

Renan tells us (page 29) that the Gospels contain "contradictions." To which I reply:—Contradiction is the work of man. Scripture cannot contradict itself; and if any one thinks he has discovered a contradiction in the Bible, there must be a flaw somewhere, if not in the passage before him, then in his own understanding of it, which is by far the more likely of the two. A degree of Divine light and spiritual wisdom, even the scholar would doubtless find to be a material help to him at such times; aye, and a properly cultivated and unprejudiced judgment would be no impediment to a proper understanding of the seeming and supposed contradiction. But the

[1] Page 91.

Gospels, Renan informs us, really contain "contradictions," and therefore—well, we will not say that it must be so. The man who is in all likelihood not aware that his own work is full of inconsistencies and contradictions (a specimen or two of which we have already given) would not, one would think, be the readiest at detecting contradictions in the writings of others. He does not tell us what they are. This is to be regretted, as it would most probably have afforded us an additional exemplification of his logic.

Renan makes an assertion, however, on page 46, from which we infer that the following must be one of the contradictions to which he refers:—"Jesus was born at Nazareth," he says, and in proof refers the reader to Matt. xiii. 54, which reads thus:—"And when He was come *into his own country*, He taught them in their synagogue." Now in v. 1, chapter ii. of his Gospel, Matthew affirms that "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea." But if in chapter xiii. he has affirmed that Christ was born at Nazareth, as Renan would have his readers believe, Matthew would himself have been the author of a palpable contradiction. Now how absurd such a supposition with respect to a matter so plain. Does Renan really suppose that he has readers simple enough to believe that Matthew would be guilty of so flagrant a contradiction, as to say in one chapter that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and in another that He was born at Nazareth? The one chapter being as well authenticated, is of course as certainly his as the other. But is there really anything in the two passages bearing even the most distant approach to a contradiction? Let us see. By the first, it is asserted that Jesus was born in Bethlehem; by the second, that He was *born* at Nazareth? No, but simply that He had come

into His own country, where He had lived from the time of Joseph's "return with the young child from Egypt;" and hence, in accordance with universal custom, was very properly called His own country, although not the place in which by a concurrence of circumstances (providentially ordered, Renan) he happened to have been born. In turning to the parallel passage, Luke iv. 16, as though expressly designed to meet such cavils, I find it actually thus expressed:—"And He came to Nazareth *where He had been brought up.*" Such captious quibbling as Renan here exemplifies, and which his work is full of, might be pardonable in school-boys, or college novices, who will sometimes argue for argument's sake; but such condescension, we should say, ill comports with the dignity of a scientific gentleman and a philosopher.

But why does M. Renan exhibit such concern about the place of Christ's birth? Why, simply this: there was a little circumstance connected with it that clashes with his creed. An ancient *prophecy* is connected with it, and it had its fulfilment in His birth at Bethlehem—"And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule My people Israel."—Matt. ii. 4—6.

Another difficulty presents itself to the mind of M. Renan. Luke is made by our translators to say that Joseph, who was "of the house and lineage of David," went to Bethlehem, the city of David, to be taxed *when Cyrenius was Governor* of Syria. (Luke ii. 2). This point, which has

for a long time been regarded as rather a difficult one by Biblical students, has now, in the judgment of the learned Editor of the *Quarterly Review*, been satisfactorily explained. It appears that the persevering research and patient investigation of a German divine, who, as a classical scholar and exponent of Roman history, enjoys a high reputation in Germany, has been rewarded by the discovery of certain historic facts as recorded in the annals of Roman history, which go to prove that the Cyrenius of Luke's Gospel was twice Governor of Syria—first for a term of five years, commencing in the year 4 before the Christian era, when the Jews, according to Jewish law, under Herod their King, repaired each man to his own city for the purpose of being taxed; and secondly, in the year 6 after the Christian era, when Judea, being at this time reduced to a Roman province, was taxed according to the Roman fashion. Cyrenius, or more properly, according to the Roman form, Quirinius, was, according to this, appointed to the Governorship of Syria a short time previous to the death of Herod, the reigning Jewish King, and while Judea was still permitted by Augustus to be internally governed by Jewish law. And Quirinius having at this time levied the tax referred to by Luke, the *time* and *place* of our Lord's birth, as connected with this Governor and with Bethlehem, are alike accounted for. The expression of Luke, "This taxing was first made," evidently implies a subsequent taxing, or taxings, of a similar kind, and it is doubtless to the one subsequently taken by Quirinius, a reference to which is here made that Luke refers in Acts v. 37.

As the result of scholastic research, it is thus made to appear that the taxing or enrolment referred to in Luke's Gospel is identical with the enrolment of the inhabitants

and property of the Roman world, which is represented by the Roman historians, Tacitus and Suetonius, as having taken place under Augustus some years previous to the edict for an after enrolment as mentioned by Josephus. And as the discovery made by the German scholar, Dr. Zumpt, goes to show that Quirinius was Governor of Syria at the time of each enrolment, or collection of the tax, his *first* Governorship having extended over a period of five years, embracing the time of taxing to which Luke refers, this, with the reference made by Josephus to the second enrolment, is in this manner, quite reconcilable.

A reference is also made by the *Quarterly Review* to a certain inscription on a sepulchral tablet discovered near Tivoli, which is believed to also refer to the two-fold term of Government of Quirinius; but "the argument of Dr. Zumpt," says the *Review*, "is thoroughly convincing without it." It further remarks that it is a "complete success," and adds—"Here is a difficulty which but some thirty years ago Dr. Strauss was gloating over and declaring to be entirely insoluble,—and now we behold it solved. Here we have another proof that Biblical studies are not, as they were once regarded, a stationary science, but like all other sciences, admit of progression and increase."

We may further add in reference to the solution of this difficulty, that the theory of Dr. Zumpt is adopted by Thomas Lewin, Esq., of Trinity College, Oxford, M.A., F.S.A., author of a "Key to the Chronology of the New Testament;" that it is endorsed by Dr. McCosh, the learned and philosophic author of "Christianity and Positivism;" that it is sanctioned by the high authority of the present Archbishop of York, and also by the celebrated

author of a recent "Commentary of the Greek Testament," the late Dr. Alford, Dean of Canterbury.

A brief reference here to the old method of disposing of this "difficulty" will, doubtless, not be unacceptable to the reader. It appears that the original text will bear a varied translation, and hence various attempts have been made by learned and eminent critics to remove the difficulty. But the version of it as given by the learned Dr. Lardner is, in the judgment of Dr. Adam Clarke, and of the Rev. A. Barnes, the most satisfactory. In the Commentary of the latter it is thus given :—"According to his (Dr. Lardner's) view it means, 'This was the *first* census of Cyrenius, Governor of Syria. It is called the *first* to distinguish it from one *afterwards* taken by Cyrenius.'—Acts v. 37. It is said to be the census taken by *Cyrenius, Governor of Syria*, not that he was *then* Governor, but that it was taken by him who was *afterwards* familiarly known as Governor. *Cyrenius, Governor of Syria* was the name by which the man was known; and it was not improper to say that the taxing was made by *Cyrenius, Governor of Syria*, though he might not have been actually Governor for many years afterwards. Thus Herodotus says that 'to Marcus *the Emperor* were born several daughters and two sons,' though several of those children were born to him before he was Emperor. According to this Augustus sent Cyrenius, an active, enterprising man, to take the census. At that time he was a Román senator, afterwards he was made Governor of the same country, and received the title which Luke gives him."

The explanation quoted from Dr. Lardner by Mr. Barnes is certainly very reasonable. He who when a Roman senator had been appointed to make the assessment referred to by Luke, had been also made Governor previously to Luke's

having narrated the circumstance; and hence it is that this first taxing, or assessment, as well as the one subsequently taken, was truly the assessment of this Governor. Other explanations have been given, but these to a candid mind, I am persuaded, will prove quite satisfactory. The difficulty above explained is the only one we have noticed, worthy of note, referred to in the whole of Renan's work; but if the intelligent reader would have every difficulty solved that may occur to his mind in the perusal of the Scriptures, he must, if he would act rationally, put himself to the trouble of consulting Commentaries, Scripture Harmonies, &c. Unless he does this, agreeably with the spirit of the Apostolic injunction, "Prove all things," he must necessarily remain in ignorance and uncertainty in reference to a great many apparent difficulties that may in this way be easily solved. Besides difficulties which are purely imaginary, we may expect to find many things in the Scriptures which, to the carnal mind, as the Apostle Peter says, are "hard to be understood;" and hence we are exhorted to take care that we do not, as do others, "wrest them to our own destruction."

With regard to the apparent discrepancies which the Gospels are said to contain, Dr. McCosh, President of New Jersey College, Princeton, in his work on "Christianity and Positivism," has some very excellent remarks. He says (page 256, and following):—"There certainly is not in these biographies that laboured consistency which we always find in *trumped-up* story, and which so prejudices all who are in the way of shrewdly estimating testimony. The writers are artless in everything; but they are especially so in this, that, conscious of speaking the truth, they are not careful to reconcile what they say in one place with what

they or others may say in another place. I admit that we have such differences as are always to be found in the reports of independent witnesses; but I deny that there are contradictions. Commentators may differ, and are at liberty to do so, as to the explanations which they offer of the apparent discrepancies. All meanwhile may agree in declaring that the difficulties arise solely from our not knowing more than the Evangelists have told us, and that they would vanish if we knew all the circumstances. To illustrate what I mean in a very familiar way:—One day, when passing along the streets of the city in which I lived at the time, I saw that there was a house on fire about half a mile off; and as I happened to have an official interest in a dwelling in that quarter, used for a philanthropic purpose, I proceeded towards the spot. Meeting a person who seemed to be coming from the fire, I asked him where it was, and he told me it was in a certain street. Passing on towards that street, I asked another person where the fire was, and he gave me the name of a different street. I asked a third witness about the fire: he told me he had been there, and it was nearly extinguished. I met a fourth individual a little way farther on, and he informed me that it was blazing with greater fury than ever. Had I stopped here, I might have been tempted to say, What a bundle of contradictions!—one says the fire is in one street, and another that it is in a different street; one says that the flames are nearly extinguished, and another says they are increasing; and had I stopped it might have been impossible for me to reconcile the inconsistencies. But I had reason to be concerned about that fire, and so I went on, and found that all the witnesses had spoken the truth. The house was a corner one, between the two streets which had been named; the

flames had been kept down for a time, but afterwards burst forth with greater fury than ever. Nowhere in these Gospels do we meet with such violent discrepancies as I had in the statements of these four men. . . . .

"As to the apparent discrepancies between the Evangelists, there is often room for difference of opinion as to the proper reconciliation; and a candid man may often find it proper to say, I believe both accounts, and I am sure they could be reconciled if we knew the whole facts. Sometimes the difficulty is to be removed by supposing that the two Evangelists are not recording the same events, but different incidents so far alike. It is clear that our Lord proceeded on a system or method in the deeds He performed, and was in the way of performing very much the same sort of deeds at different times and places. Thus we have Him multiplying loaves and fishes on two several occasions. Matthew tells us (xv. 32–39; see also Mark viii. 1–9) that Jesus fed four thousand, but he had previously told us that He had fed five thousand; and if He had not done so, the infidel might have urged that Matthew (xv. 32–39) was contradicted by John (vi. 5–16), where we are told that five thousand were fed. It is clear that there were two such transactions; that Mark records the one and John the other, while Matthew details both. . . . .

"More frequently we are to account for the seeming discrepancy by the very simple and intelligible fact, that one witness gives one feature, and another supplies a different feature, and that we are to combine the two if we would have the whole figure before us. . . . .

"There is a palpable discrepancy between the genealogy of our Lord as given by Matthew and by Luke. In saying so, I do not refer merely to the circumstance that the one

goes back only to Abraham, whereas the other ascends to Adam; but to real differences in the account. The number of ancestors in the two rolls is not the same, nor are the individual names identical. Matthew's division into three fourteens gives forty-two ancestors from Jesus to Abraham, whereas Luke reckons fifty-six. Matthew (i. 6) makes the descent from David through Solomon; whereas Luke (iii. 31) makes it from David through Nathan, 'which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David.' . . . The subject has been taken up and discussed with great care and a large amount of success, by Lord Arthur Hervey, in an elaborate volume.[1] Matthew's genealogy, he argues, is meant to show that Jesus was legal successor to the throne of David; and, therefore, His descent is traced through the line of Kings—through Solomon, Rehoboam, Abia, and Asa, and Jehosaphat, and Jehoram, and so forth. Luke, on the other hand, gives His private, His natural, His family genealogy, which he traces back to David through Nathan. Matthew shows that He was legally the heir of the throne of David through the monarchs of Judah and their legal descendants. Luke brings out the real progenitors, who were not kings, though descended from David. You may understand what I mean, if you consider that a man might be the legal heir of a property which was not possessed by his father or grandfather, or actual progenitors for generations immediately passed. In such a case he might have two genealogies, one through the persons possessing the property, the other of his proper natural progenitors. By this simple principle the author brings the two accounts into harmony. . . . Thus the simple principle that one Evangelist exhibits that genealogy which contained the successive heirs to David and Solomon's throne, while the

[1] "Genealogies of our Lord."

other exhibits the paternal stem of Him who was the heir, explains all the anomalies of the two pedigrees — their agreements as well as their discrepancies, and the circumstance of their being two at all. . . . .

"Matthew wrote specially to the Hebrews; and as he declares (i. 1), he sets before us Jesus as the son of David and the son of Abraham, the Messiah promised by the prophets. Mark exhibits Jesus (see i. 1) as the Son of God, and dwells forcibly on His deeds of power. Luke, the companion of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, shows, as he professes (iii. 38), how Jesus 'was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.'

"As to the obvious circumstance that John's Gospel differs so much from the others, not only in the narrative, but in the sort of discourses put into our Lord's mouth, I have never thought that it raises any very formidable difficulty. John tells us at the close of his Gospel, 'And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself [A hyperbolic expression common in the East,[1]] could not contain the books that should be written. Of the things which He did, of the words which He spoke, we have only a few recorded. The first three Evangelists give us so much; they give us what had been inscribed most deeply on the hearts and memories of the Apostles at Jerusalem, each, however, writing independently of the others. John wrote his Gospel at a later date, and he studiously brings out other incidents of our Lord's life, and new features of His character. I believe that each writer presents our Lord under the aspect which most impressed him. . . . In the one we have certain qualities which all

[1] See Josephus, Antiq. lib. xix. c. Also Philo in his Tract "*De Ebriet.*" T. I. p. 362, 10. Also Homer's Illiad, c. 20.

the disciples comprehended and relished, and we have specially His human side brought fully into view; whereas the apostle who leaned on His bosom, and evidently looked into that bosom, and was warmed by it, has brought out perfections of our Lord founded on the depths of His divine nature. From that day to this, the great body of Christians have always turned first to the synoptic Gospels; while there have always been a select few who have felt that the disciple of love carries them closer to the inner nature, to the heart of Jesus. We should thank God for providing both, that all and each may find something to attract the eye and gain the confidence of the heart.

"The light which comes from the sun is one and the same; but how different are the colours as reflected from different objects! The same rays fall on every part of that plant, but from the leaves are reflected the soft and lively green, and from the flowers the deep purple or the brighter red or yellow. So it is with Him who is expressly called the Sun of righteousness and light of the world: He shone on all the Evangelists alike, but each reflects the hue that most impressed Him. I am tempted once more to use a familiar illustration from my own history. My father died when I was a boy, and I have a dimmer recollection of him than I could wish. In order to get a clearer idea of him, I have applied to different persons. I have applied to neighbours; I have applied to elder sisters; I have applied to a nearer still, to his widow and my mother. The accounts given by them were substantially one; but they differed in some points, and the most endearing of all was by the dearest friend. I believe that the disciple whom Jesus loved was able to enter into and reciprocate some of the deepest and yet the most delicate of the characteristics

of our Lord. As being himself struck with them, he has recorded the incidents and preserved the discourses in which they were exhibited. . . . I am inclined to think that, while all received much, John took in most, and so has given out most, of the profundity of our Lord's doctrine and the tenderness of His sentiment.

"And as to the Apostle's own style in his Gospel and in his three Epistles being so like that of our Lord, we are to account for it as we explain the sameness of style in prose, poetry, and painting, on the part of pupils, and the masters whom they admire. I believe it is to be traced to the circumstance that John, as he leant upon the bosom of his Master, had drunk into His spirit, and moulded himself in style as in character upon the great Exemplar."[1]

Allow also a quotation bearing on the all-important subject of the Gospels' authenticity, from the able pen of the Rev. Dr. Hamilton. Speaking of the four Gospels, he says: "They are not four productions of one biographer, but each is the work of a distinct individual. In other words there are four Evangelists, as well as four Gospels. To say nothing of external evidence, but judging entirely from their intrinsic style and manner, especially when read in the original, these four memoirs are the work of *four separate biographers.*

"Looking at them again, we are struck with their *circumstantial minuteness.* One canvas may be more crowded than another; but each of them contains, perhaps, a hundred heads, and many of them with very decided and definite features. Not only is the great central object carefully depicted in all, but there is no tendency to slur over in safe and shadowy vagueness, the subordinate and accessory

[1] See this subject fully treated in "Christianity and Positivism," by James McCosh, D.D., LL.D.

figures. Each is given fresh and firm, and with the precision of those who had the originals before them. Looking at these historic sketches, you instantly observe the copiousness of truth, and the exactitude of personal information. Romancers lay the scene in a distant region or a departed time; the Evangelists recount events happening in their own country, and in their living day. And deceivers confine the story to their own immediate coterie, and take care to introduce no names which might be apt to resent the fraud and publish the imposition. But, strong in conscious truthfulness, the Evangelists abound in dates, and in names of well-known persons and places, Jerusalem, and Jericho, and Nazareth, are introduced as freely as Capernaum or Bethsaida; men in public station, like Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, and hostile personages, like Annas and Caiaphas, Pontius Pilate, the Herods, and Herodias, are brought in with no more hesitation than Peter, and James, and John. Miracles do not happen to nameless people in unknown regions: but it is on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, and on the eve of a memorable Passover, that Bartimeus, the blind beggar, the son of Timeus, is restored to sight; and it is at Bethany, a village two miles from the capital, that Lazarus, a few days afterwards, is recalled from the tomb. Everything is distinct and express; and having nothing to fear from contradiction, by multiplying incidents, and by introducing well-known persons and places, they put it in the power of every contemporary to ascertain the truth of their testimony.

"Surveying our picture once more, we are finally struck with sundry *delicate and undesigned coincidences* between them; and when we say, 'delicate and undesigned,' we purposely exclude those obvious and outstanding features which could

scarcely elude the notice of even a copyist; but we refer to those little and recondite ingredients which can only occur in sketches direct from the original. For instance, in numbers one and two this grey speck might pass for a stone or a sheep, and it is only when we refer to number three that we find it is meant for a human figure. In the corner of one picture is what seems to be a single tree; in another, a lozenge of light opens through the trunk; and in a third sketch, the perforated bole resolves into two distinct trees planted near to one another. And as these remote agreements and recondite mutual illustrations successively arise to our earnest gaze, the conviction grows at last irresistible, that whatever they may have known of one another, there was a common original to which the artists were indebted alike for their variations and their concord. When we take up the Evangelists we are struck with that free and independent way in which each gives his version of events, as if secure that his statement will speak for itself, and no less confident in the veracity of his several colleagues. He shows no nervousness as to his reception. He makes no effort to soften down what is strange, or to give extra effect to what is surprising. He offers no explanation to make his narrative tally with some previous history, or to establish its own self-consistency. But on the other hand, there is occasionally a seeming contradiction, a pretermission of particulars, or a condensation of incidents, or a peculiarity in the spectator's standing point, which gives to the narrative an obscurity of meaning, or all the air of an entirely different story, till a careful comparison supplies the gap and completes the harmony.

"For instance, in his account of the crucifixion, Matthew tells that 'the soldiers smote Jesus with the palms of their

hands, saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote Thee?' And in this challenge there seems nothing very difficult, and we could not have seen the force of the insult nor the meaning of the passage, had not another Evangelist written down, 'And *when they had blindfolded Him*, they struck Him on the face, saying, Prophesy who is it that smote Thee?' (Luke xxii. 64).

"All the Evangelists agree in telling, that when the high priest's officers came out to arrest Jesus, Peter drew a sword and smote off the servant's ear. And yet, both Matthew and Mark agree in relating, that when Christ's persecutors sought all sorts of evidence against Him, so as to make out a case before the Roman Governor, they could procure none. But is it not very strange, that when the high priest had in his own palace such a striking proof of the violent character and dangerous designs of these Galileans, he should not have called as a witness his own wounded servant? Had we possessed no information beyond the narratives of Matthew and Mark, this would have been a flagrant difficulty. You say that the whole effort of the priests was to prejudice Pilate against Jesus, as a seditious and turbulent character; but they could substantiate nothing. Why was not this recent and conclusive witness forthcoming? Especially when Jesus said to Pilate, 'My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world *then would my servants fight*, that I should not be delivered to the Jews.' Why did none of his accusers reply, 'Yes, but your servants did fight, and one of them has inflicted a wound on the sacred person of the high priest's servant?' Now had we possessed no Gospels except these two, we could not have accounted for so strange an oversight on the part of the priestly faction. But Luke mentions a circumstance

which sufficiently explains it. From his account we find, that as soon as Peter smote off the ear *Jesus healed it again;* and by doing this He effectually disqualified the wounded servant from appearing as a witness against Him. The priests were in this dilemma:—If next morning, they produced the servant as a proof of the violence of Christ and His followers, how could Pilate credit them? That wound was never inflicted over night, or it could not be cured so soon. Or if, to explain this latter circumstance, they acknowledged that Christ had instantaneously healed it, they would at once have trod on dangerous ground, and would have given Pilate another reason for suspecting—what he was already very apt to surmise—the superhuman character of his Prisoner.

"In Matthew (viii. 16) we read, that 'when the even was come they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils, and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick.' But why was it *evening* when they brought to Jesus those demoniacs and sick persons? From Mark (i. 21—32) we find that it was the Sabbath-day; and from Luke (xiii. 14) we find that the Jews thought it sinful for 'men to come and be healed on the Sabbath-day.' But we also know that the Jewish Sabbath ceased at sunset; so that when the evening was come the people would feel no scruple in bringing their afflicted friends to Jesus to be healed. But observe how far we have to travel before we can complete Matthew's simple statement. He merely mentions that it was in the evening Jesus wrought these cures; and had we possessed Matthew's narrative alone, we might have laid no particular stress on the time of day. But we go on to Mark, and we find that it was the Sabbath evening, 'when the sun was set.' And we go on

to Luke, and find, though in a totally different connection, that these Jews would have thought it very wicked to carry the sick, or to accept a cure on the Sabbath. And it is just because the particulars are so minute that the coincidence is so valuable. They are just such trifles which a true historian is apt to omit, and just such trifles that a fabricator would never think of supplying. Or if we could imagine a forger systematically attempting to complete the omissions of his predecessor, he would not deposit his supplemental information in nooks and by-paths, where ages might elapse before it was discovered; but he would exhibit his *addendum* in some conspicuous position, and would take care that it should arrest the reader's attention.

"The more delicate these coincidences are, the surer is the inference from them. If you were comparing a cheque with the cheque-book from which it was said to be taken, and found not only the cut portion to correspond with the counterfoil, but if on microscopic examination the torn corner finely coincided,—if you found its rough and ragged edge and each riven fibre to match exactly the surface from which it was said to be sundered, you could no longer doubt that the piece of paper in your hand had been taken from that book. And these delicate agreements of one evangelist with another, show that their story is an extract from the Book of Truth—a leaf from the volume of actual occurrences —a derivation from a counterpart original. The Evangelist John tells us (vi. 5), that on one occasion, when surrounded by a weary multitude, Jesus said, 'Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?' And in putting this question He addressed Himself to Philip. But John hints no reason why He should have put this enquiry to Philip rather than to any other apostle. Luke, however (ix. 10), mentions that

the place was a desert near Bethsaida; and John himself happens to have mentioned, in the opening of his Gospel (i. 44), that Bethsaida was the city of Philip. And laying these three insulated passages together, we see how natural it was to put the question, 'Where is bread to be bought?' to one acquainted with the neighbourhood. Had we not possessed John's Gospel, we should never have known that such a question was asked; and had we not possessed Luke's Gospel, we should never have seen the special propriety of asking it at Philip.

"We have chosen these examples because in them the truth of certain miracles happens to be implicated. If the coincidences now quoted be real and undesigned, then, not only are they an irresistible argument for the truth of the collective narrative, but they establish directly as facts the healing of Malchus's ear, the cure of many sick and demoniacs, and the miraculous feeding of the multitude with five loaves and two fishes; for it is in the recital of these miracles those coincidences, so truth-vouching, occur. And if, again, these miracles be true, then is Jesus all that He professed, for it was in support of His claims as Messiah that He wrought these miracles.

"But from the Gospels we may transfer this test to other portions of the New Testament. We have there a book mainly occupied with the travels of St. Paul; and alongside of it we have thirteen epistles ascribed to the same apostle. Now, even supposing that the author of the epistles and the author of the Acts were the same individual, it has been triumphantly shown by a sort of microscopical survey, that nothing but scrupulous truth or omniscient falsehood could account for the complex and involute agreement which subsists between them. To detect these latent harmonies was,

perhaps, the greatest service to historic Christianity which acumen and sound sense united have ever rendered; and, though it is impossible to offer any abstract here, we may safely congratulate, as proof against circumstantial evidence, the sceptic who reads the 'Horæ Paulinæ,' and still doubts whether such a man as Paul existed, whether his epistles be genuine, and whether the Acts of the Apostles be true.

"We have often visited the ruins of a famous castle, with which, no doubt, many of our readers are well acquainted. Long ago it was captured, and that it might never be a stronghold to the patriots of Germany again, the enemy burnt it and blew up the walls. But in the weedy foss is still shown a huge fragment of a tower, which, when exploded, alighted there; and in the goodly joining of its stones, and the hardening of its ancient mortar, such a rocky mass had it become, that when lifted from its base, instead of descending in a shower of rubbish, it came down superbly a tower still. And like that massy keep, the books we have been considering are so knit together in their exquisite accuracy, the histories are so riveted to one another, and the epistles so mortised into the histories; and the very substance of epistles and histories alike is so penetrated by that cement of all-pervading reality, that the whole now forms an indissoluble concrete. And though all coeval literature had perished, though all the external confirmations were destroyed, though all the monuments of antiquity were annihilated, strong in its intrinsic truthfulness, the New Testament would still hold its lofty place—a tower of self-sustaining integrity. And though the efforts of enmity were to succeed as they have signally failed, though learned hostility were to undermine its documentary foundations, and blow up that evidence of manuscripts and early versions

on which it securely reposes, so finely do its facts fit into one another, so strongly are its several portions clamped together, and in the penetration and interfusion through all its parts of its ultimate inspiring Authorship, into such a homogeneous structure has it consolidated, that it would come down again on its own basis, shifted, but nowise shattered. Such a book has God made the Bible, that, whatever theories wax popular, or whatever systems explode, 'the Scripture cannot be broken.'"[1]

"The attempt," observes M. Renan, "to find a guiding thread through this labyrinth [of Gospel narrations] ought not to be taxed with gratuitous subtlety." His sister, who told him she should love his book, nevertheless, at times, "feared for it" the condemnation of "the frivolous," or of those who were not "truly religious souls;" and he here seems to betray a kindred presentiment in himself. But changing the expression to "those who *are* truly religious souls," as truth requires, we would say, well they might "fear for it" such condemnation, for truly there was reason. To be taxed with "gratuitous subtlety," however, he thinks too severe a condemnation, since his object has been to "succeed in combining the texts in such a manner that they shall constitute a logical, probable narrative, harmonious throughout." In doing so, he has endeavoured to strictly adhere to "the rules of classic narration," calling to his aid "the methods of art," so giving to the texts what he calls "an appreciative interpretation," and making them "dovetail and furnish a whole in which all the parts are happily blended." "In such an effort," he says, moreover, "some share of divination and conjecture must be per-

[1] See "Light to the Path," by James Hamilton, D.D., F.L.S. New edition, London.

mitted."[1] Well, between his "classic rules, art, divination, conjecture, dovetailing," etc., he has produced, he hopes, not "a caricature" of the Gospel history, but "the general spirit of the work; at least, one of the forms in which it could have existed." "In which it *could have* existed!" It must be some satisfaction to the mind of this gentleman, no doubt, to have accomplished *so* much as the result of his arduous and protracted labours, and will perhaps be an encouragement to some other philosopher who may have in contemplation the discovery of *another form* in which it "*could have existed;*" and the world will doubtless be under an obligation to accord to them its verdict of commendation corresponding with the very important conclusion thus arrived at, as the result of their progressive and philosophic labours.

In a tone of self-exculpation, and with all the assurance we might look for from one who is really guiltless in the matter, Renan exclaims: "Preserve us from mutilating history in order to satisfy our petty susceptibilities!"[2] But if ever there was a man who has mutilated history from such a cause and for such a purpose, that man is Renan. His work throughout bears witness to the fact, that his criticisms of the Gospels are little else than one continued mutilation of history. He exhibits a degree of presumption and audacity in the liberty he has taken with these most authentic of historic documents that is altogether without a parallel in anything we have ever seen. And as to his ostensible grounds for so doing, (all discoverable in the articles of his creed, to which we shall hereafter refer) so utterly puerile are they, that his "petty susceptibilities" is really much too mild a term to express the character of the man in this respect.

[1] pp. 32-33. [2] Page 307.

CHAPTER III.

Character and Teaching of Jesus.

TO attempt a description of the character of Christ, were to attempt a delineation of the character of God. To do full justice to such a character, therefore, is beyond the power of man. No pen, but the pen of inspiration, can be adequate to the task of describing the character of the Being in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." As a Being possessing infinite perfections, co-equal with the Father, the natural and moral attributes of the Deity were His—the almighty power, the infinite holiness, the ineffable goodness, the unspeakable mercy, the boundless benevolence, infinite wisdom, unfathomable love, and all the other attributes of Deity were His in all their immeasurable fulness from eternity. Who then may fully describe the character of such a Being? No finite mind, for it is alike unrevealed and unrevealable. But although Christ's being was ever associated with the Infinite, He was nevertheless a man among men, had a human character, and exemplified it in all the primeval loveliness of perfect humanity. He was the most amiable of beings, and all His affections were pure. Pathos and power characterized His preaching; and immaculate innocence, His life. In Him were exemplified, truth unstained by deceit; sincerity without mixture of guile; zeal, unimpaired by ignorance; candour, undiminished by pre-

judice; fervour, without false unction; pathos, without declamation. In Him we behold fortitude, without rashness; patience, without pusillanimity; firmness, without obstinacy; humility, without meanness; meekness, without apathy; temperance, without austerity. His power was softened by tenderness; His dignity blended with love. He was great, dignified, majestic, authoritative, sovereign; yet, obedient, submissive, lowly, gentle, affable, affectionate, kind. In a word, while His noble character was real, natural, human, it was God-like, incomparable, perfect.

M. Renan's conception of the moral character and teaching of Jesus, although, in some respects, not up to the original, is nevertheless exalted. That he is an ardent admirer of Jesus as a great natural, and an incomparable, but merely human, moral luminary, appears evident from a great variety of passages found in different parts of his work. They together constitute an eloquent tribute to Christ's character as a teacher *par excellence* of morality, and to the incomparable sublimity of His own moral nature. From some of the best of such passages we select the following:—

Speaking of the pure religion Christ had founded, and of the ardent love accorded Him by the first disciples, Renan says:—"In order to make Himself adored to this degree, He must have been adorable. Love is not enkindled except by an object worthy of it, and we should know nothing of Jesus, if it were not for the passion He inspired in those about Him, which compels us still to affirm that He was great and pure. The faith, the enthusiasm, the constancy of the first Christian generation is not explicable, except by supposing at the origin of the whole movement, a man of surpassing greatness."[1] Again he says:—"He thought

[1] Page 304.

only of His work, of His race, and of humanity.[1] He was the first to say, at least by His actions, 'My kingdom is not of this world.'[2] Jesus remains an inexhaustible principle of moral regeneration for humanity. The foundation of true religion is indeed His work; after Him, all that remains is to develop it and render it fruitful. Christianity has thus become almost a synonym of religion. All that is done outside of it is barren.[4] Never has any one so much as Jesus made the interests of humanity predominate in His life over the littlenesses of self-love.[5] In Him was condensed all that is good and elevated in our nature.[6] Let us place then the person of Jesus, whom legend has deified, at the highest summit of human greatness.[7] From the midst of our uniform mediocrity, there are pillars that rise towards the sky, and bear witness to a nobler destiny; Jesus is the highest of these pillars which show to man whence he comes, and whither he ought to tend.[8] Jesus had neither dogma nor system, but a fixed personal resolution, which exceeding in intensity every other created will, directs to this hour the destinies of humanity.[9] This sublime person, who each day still presides over the destiny of the world, we may call divine, not in the sense that Jesus has absorbed all the Divine, but in the sense that Jesus is the one who has caused His fellow-men to make the greatest step towards the divine.[10] A high conception of the Divinity—which He did not owe to Judaism, and which seems to have been in all its parts the creation of His great mind—was in a manner the source of all His power."[11] The Divinity within Him, Renan, rather than "a high conception of it." The latter could never have been the source of the super-human

[1] Page 69. [2] Page 303. [3] Page 307. [4] Page 303. [5] Page 311.
[6] Page 310. [7] Page 305. [8] Page 310. [9] Page 63. [10] Page 310.
[11] Page 80.

power you, in effect, by the language above quoted, ascribe to Him. Renan proceeds :—"Human brotherhood in its widest sense overflows in all His teaching.[1] An absolutely new idea, the idea of a worship founded on purity of heart, and on human brotherhood, through Him entered into the world; and if religion is essential to humanity, He has by this deserved the Divine rank the world has accorded to Him."[2]

Of Christ's method of teaching, Renan says :—"An exquisite sympathy with nature furnished Him each moment with expressive images. Sometimes a remarkable ingenuity, which we call wit, adorned His aphorisms; at other times, their liveliness consisted in the happy use of popular proverbs.[3] But it was, above all, in parable that the Master excelled. Nothing in Judaism had given Him the model of this delightful style. He created it. His preaching was gentle and pleasing, breathing nature and the perfume of the fields. He loved the flowers, and took from them His most charming lessons. The birds of heaven, the sea, the mountains, furnished in turn the subject of His instructions."[4]

[1] Page 175. [2] Page 90. [3] Page 90.

Similar testimony to the exalted character and teaching of Christ, I may here remark, is given by one of England's most talented, though strangely eccentric and morally deluded sceptics of the present day—the late J. Stuart Mill. Although the religion of the future, he maintains, must undergo a radical change, the religion of the past, he says, "cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity." Denying Christ's Divinity, he says, nevertheless, "He was a morally perfect Being. Whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left a unique figure, not more unlike all His precursors than all His followers, even those who had the direct benefit of His personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ as exhibited in the Gospels is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of His followers. . . . Who among His disciples or among their proselytes was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; as certainly

Such are some of M. Renan's sentiments in reference to the character and teaching of Jesus as taken from various parts of his work, which concludes in the following glowing and pathetic strain :—"His worship will constantly renew its youth, the tale of His life will cause ceaseless tears, His sufferings will soften the best hearts; all the ages will proclaim that among the sons of men, there is none born who is greater than Jesus."

But although Renan thus graphically delineates the character of Jesus, placing Him upon the highest pinnacle of human greatness and glory, and pronouncing Him worthy of the divine honours the world has accorded Him, he will not allow Him the honour of "Mediator between God and Man," and he denies that He is sinless—"Why should there be a mediator between man and his Father?" he asks. Why, because man is a trangressor, we may reply—a rebel against the authority of God, and could therefore never hope for a reconciliation between offended justice and himself without such mediation. How could a guilty sinner, as every man who has a conscience must know himself to be; dare to approach an infinitely just and holy God, except through the mediation of a sinless and Divinely accepted person? That we have, according to the Scriptures, a Divinely-appointed Mediator, proves it to have been indispensable. That our case meets with a favourable hearing at the hands of Divine Justice through such mediation, and that we are accepted, pardoned, and restored to the Divine favour through Christ as our Atonement, Mediator,

not St. Paul; still less the early Christian writers, in whom nothing is more evident than that the good which was in them was all derived from a higher source. . . . About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight, which must place the Prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in His inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius."—*Mill's "Essays on Religion."*

and Intercessor, is a *mercy* for which we ought to render ceaseless thanks, adoration, and praise, to our justly offended, but in Christ graciously reconciled God.

But "Jesus was not sinless," Renan says. Then farewell to the world's hopes for the future, we reply. "Woe to the world because of iniquity," is the sentence of Jehovah. Out of Christ as an atonement, God is necessarily "a consuming fire." Such is the character of God's holiness and justice, that He cannot in the nature of things suffer a righteous law emanating from Himself to be violated with impunity. And such is His decree. Either in our own persons, therefore, or by that of a substitute, the full penalty of the righteous law we have broken must be borne. And it is not, of course, for the wicked violator of the law to say what the penalty should or should not be. That must be left wholly with Him "who has a right to reign," and who is infallible in justice and judgment. This penalty He has fixed. The penalty is "eternal death," or an eternity of *suffering*, as it is otherwise declared to be, to the guilty creature. But this penalty has been graciously commuted by Him who, according to a plan which He alone could devise, "can be just, and yet the justifier" of the penitent, believing sinner. This sentence, we say, has been commuted, God having declared Himself willing to accept the temporary sufferings and death of a substitute, most graciously and mercifully provided by Himself, and rendered infinitely efficacious by the union of the Infinite with the finite. It is this union alone that accounts for the sufferings of One being accepted as an atonement for the sins of many, and for the substitution of sufferings which were but temporary for those which were to be eternal. It is the infinitude of the Divine coupled with the human, that has stamped the

substituted sacrifice with infinite merit. A sinful sacrifice, it is evident, could not atone for sin. Christ, therefore, being the atonement accepted of God, must have been sinless, and through this sinless Saviour it is that the glad tidings of salvation have reached us—"good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people," inasmuch as it proclaimed "peace on earth, good will towards men." It proclaims peace to them that are nigh, and peace to them that are afar off; peace to the Jewish and peace to the Gentile world, even to all who are willing to accept of it on the terms provided,—"Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," followed by "works meet for repentance," and a steadfast determination, in humble dependence on Divine aid, to keep the commandments of God, and depart from all iniquity.

He who was to "save His people from their sins," we repeat, must necessarily have been Himself sinless; and hence the question, in vindication of His immaculate character, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" Renan, however, as we have said, objects to this doctrine. But wherein does he accuse Christ of sin? In nought, we answer, but that which is solely the creation of his own corrupt imagination. Had he been present when Christ put the question to His adversaries, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" Renan, being of the same mind that he now is, if consistent, would have stepped forward and said, "*I do*, inasmuch as You profess to be without it, teach doctrines that I consider to be false, and practise imposition upon the weak-minded people in pretended confirmation of Your being Divinely commissioned to teach such doctrines to men—practise imposition, I say, such as opening the eyes of those who were born blind, restoring those among us who

were possessed or raving mad, to their right mind, cleansing and restoring to health incurable lepers, molesting the dead while lying peacefully on their biers when on their way to the quiet grave, and even summoning them to come forth in presence of the gaping crowd after they had peacefully yielded up their spirits, and quietly lain for a lengthened period in their last quiet resting place. These, and similar impositions, such as feeding the starving multitude of some five thousand or more souls with a few loaves and fishes, and not only making the people believe that they were filled to the full, but before their eyes taking up of the fragments that were left a quantity some ten or twelve times greater than was in the basket when You commenced breaking it to them—and all this to confirm your Divine mission as a Teacher commissioned to teach such things as I disapprove of. I assert, Sir, that You are not sinless!" A true, but not a very enviable position this in which the scientific gentleman is placed by his visionary religious philosophy.

Very beautiful indeed many of the preceding quotations from Renan relative to the character and teaching of Jesus, but their artful intermixture with so much that is poisonous and polluting—the enormous excess of dross with the gold, of wormwood with the honey, must render the work, as a whole, a most nauseous, unpalatable, and unprofitable thing to all those whose tastes have not been vitiated by frequent and unhallowed contact with the morally impure. Whoever drinks long at such polluted cisterns will not fail to become polluted thereby. To some it is doubtless dangerous to come near them at all. Infidel pollution in contact with degenerate nature is contagious, and withal very defiling. But to proceed with our review:—Renan changes his

idealistic conception of the God-man as couched in the following bit of sublime nonsense, and presents to his readers another picture of Him. He treats our Lord, in fact, to use a vulgar illustration, very much as the wind does a weather-cock, so impiously changeable, and strangely inconsistent is he. "The Jesus who founded the true kingdom of God, the kingdom of the meek and the humble," he says, "was the Jesus of early life,—of those chaste and pure days when the voice of His Father re-echoed within Him in clearer tones. It was then for some months, perhaps a year, that God truly dwelt upon the earth. [!] The voice of the young carpenter suddenly acquired an extraordinary sweetness. An infinite charm was exhaled from his person, and those who had seen him up to that time no longer recognized him!" Very musical this bit of charming sentimentalism to a French ear, no doubt, but to a British ear, I think it must sound somewhat weak, windy, and discordant. If this were all, however, it might be passed over as simply an illustration of the amazing weakness and credulity sometimes found in minds which, in some respects, are much above the ordinary calibre; but when he turns round upon his departed friend whose life he has been writing, and in whose favour he has said so much, and pronounces Him credulous and chimerical, and withal charges Him with deceit, duplicity, and imposition,—it at once raises the question as to the sincerity of his professed friendship, and whether he is not rather one of the very worst of His enemies under the disguise of a most false and hypocritical profession of friendship. "The kisses of an enemy are deceitful." We should rather be disposed, however, to charge it to his amazing blindness, under the curse of God for his apostacy—"repro-

[1] Page 84.

bate according to the faith, given over to believe a lie, deceiving and being deceived."

"The world," Renan says, "has not been ended, as Jesus announced, and as His disciples believed. After the death of John, or of the last survivor, whoever he might be, of the group which had seen the Master, the word of Jesus was convicted of *falsehood*.[1] His realistic conception of the Divine advent was but a cloud, a transient error, which His death has made us forget.[2] His chimera has not had the fate of so many others which have crossed the human mind, because it concealed a germ of life which having been introduced into the bosom of humanity, has thus brought forth eternal fruits. If the doctrine of Jesus had been simply belief in an approaching end of the world, it would certainly now be sleeping in oblivion."[3] Now, by way of illustrating the remarkable inconsistency of the man, and the singular penchant he has for contradictory assertions, we will quote a passage or two bearing upon this point, from pages 84 and 108:—"The admirable moral," says Renan, "which Jesus draws from the idea of God as Father, is not that of enthusiasts who believe that the world is near its end, and who prepare themselves by asceticism for a chimerical catastrophe; it is that of men who have lived, and still would live. A visionary who had no other idea than the proximity of the last judgment, would not have had this care for the amelioration of man, and would not have given utterance to the finest moral teaching that humanity has received." Is it not most obvious then, that that man must himself be a visionary who asserts that Jesus believed in, and taught such close "proximity of the last judgment" in connection with "His fine moral teachings," which were designed to promote "the amelioration of man"—of those

[1] Page 204. [2] Page 84. [3] Page 204.

"who have lived and who still would live?" The man who with the same breath, as it were, charges another with being visionary and chimerical, and then in effect recalls the charge by the utterance of language the very opposite in sentiment, convicts himself of the charge he has laid against the other, proves nothing beyond the fact that he himself is the visionary.

Renan proceeds:—"He liked to be honoured, for honours served his aim in establishing his title of "Son of David."[1] Many of the recommendations which He addressed to His disciples contain the germs of true fanaticism.[2] He was sometimes harsh and capricious. Contact with the world pained and revolted Him. Obstacles irritated Him. Contact with men degraded Him to their level.[3] Bitterness and reproach took more and more hold upon Him. In fact, He was not able to receive opposition with the coolness of a philosopher, who understanding the reason of the various opinions which divide the world, finds it quite natural that all should not agree with Him.[4] His idea of the Son of God became disturbed and exaggerated.[5] The harsh and gloomy feeling of distaste for the world, and of excessive self-abnegation which characterizes Christian perfection, was originated, not by the refined and cheerful moralist of early days, but by the sombre giant whom a kind of grand presentiment was withdrawing more and more out of the pale of humanity."[6] Referring to Christ's intercourse with the Scribes and Pharisees at Jerusalem, Renan says: "His harmonious genius was wasted in insipid argumentations upon the Law and the prophets, in which we should have preferred not seeing Him sometimes play the part of aggressor.[7] He was no longer the mild teacher who deli-

[1] Page 259. [2] Page 230. [3] Page 257. [4] Page 229. [5] Page 226. [6] Page 222. [7] Page 241.

vered the sermon on the Mount, who had met with neither resistance nor difficulty.[1] In this dull and impure city of Jerusalem, Jesus was no longer Himself. Not by any fault of His own, but by that of others, His conscience had lost something of its original purity. Desperate and driven to extremity, He was no longer His own Master. His mission overwhelmed Him, and He yielded to the torrent." Blasphemous assertions! To the "torrent" of a corrupt nature, Renan is most certainly yielding, and unless the infinite mercy of God in Christ give him repentance unto life. by that very mission, which he affirms overwhelmed Jesus, will he himself be "overwhelmed." The evangelists, he says, "falsified their Master;" but if Renan falsified Him no more than they, it would indeed be well for him. If he dies with his present belief, it had been unspeakably better for him that he had never been born. His book, too, which has cost him so much labour and pains, poor deluded man, will be to him as a mill-stone around his neck, sinking him deeper and deeper into the depths of hell!

Renan proceeds: "The universal belief was, that the Messiah would be son of David, and like him would be born at Bethlehem. Jesus believed Himself the Son of God, and not the son of David. But public opinion on this point made Him do violence to Himself. He allowed a title to be given Him, without which He could not hope for success. It is thus that we have seen Him adopt the baptism of John, although it could not have been of much importance to Him."[2] And "it is thus" that M. Renan falsifies and blasphemously misrepresents his Master—or his *Judge*, rather, as Christ cannot be supposed to recognise him as a *servant*. He here impeaches the purity of our Lord's motives, and charges Him with duplicity and deceit

[1] Page 229. [2] Page 178.

in acting not from a fixed principle because it was right in itself, but from policy, to carry an end, to which such deviation from the path of integrity was made subservient—a principle which, from the work before us, we can have no hesitation in believing to be in perfect consonance with the mind and character of the biographer, but infinitely far removed from the spotless character of the subject of his gratuitous biography. The Evangelists, he says, "only half understood Him." How perfectly M. Renan understands Him, does he not? and how unerringly he depicts His true character! In one of his happier moods he remarks, "The Evangelists themselves, who have bequeathed us the image of Jesus, are so much beneath Him of whom they speak, that they constantly disfigure Him, from their inability to attain to His height. Their writings are full of errors and misconceptions. On the whole, the character of Jesus, far from having been embellished by His biographers, has been lowered by them."[1] What an admirably embellished picture M. Renan has presented to us of His character, in the passages just quoted! This, however, we are not to regard as at all surprising, since he of course has the "ability to attain to His height." What a pity that the providence of God—or chance—did not raise up Renan in the days of Christ, and make an evangelist of him, so that the world might have had one on whose understanding in his representations of Jesus, they might have unhesitatingly relied. Had the world been thus favoured, perhaps a "discreet doubter," as he puts it, in matters of spiritual concern, had never been born!

Philosopher Renan could not only have understood "the Master," but he could also have enlightened Him; for "light of the world" as Christ was, "Much darkness,"

[1] Page 306.

nevertheless, Renan says, "mixed itself with even His most correct views."[1] "His reasonings," moreover, he says, "were often subtle. And He lent Himself with a condescension we cannot but regret, to the captious criticisms to which the merciless cavillers subjected Him."[2] How much He must have stood in need of the good counsels of a Renan at such times. Luminous star of the age! I wonder will a biographer be found capable of representing him as truly as he has Christ.

On page 112, Renan again refers to the "contradictory" teaching of Christ in reference to "the approaching end of the world, and the general moral system of Jesus conceived in prospect of a permanent state of society. That it is a contradiction," he says, "no one will attempt to deny." And that M. Renan is the sole author of such contradiction, arising from his singularly weak misconception of Christ's true teaching, "no one," we presume, "will attempt to deny."

A softened expression or two given in justification of the duplicity and untruthfulness he has imputed to Christ, while they of course lay his own character in this respect open to suspicion, and "put us upon our guard" as to the veracity of statements that may be made to subserve the purpose of this very original thinker, they also afford an illustration of his extraordinary ability to philosophize and moralize. "It was exactly this contradiction," he says, "between the general moral system of Jesus conceived in prospect of a permanent state of society, and the belief in the approaching end of the world, that insured the success of His work." Again, he says, referring to the same subject: "Let us not despise this chimera which has been the thick rind of the sacred fruit on which we live.[3] It contained a germ of life,

[1] Page 108. [2] Page 241. [3] Page 206.

which, thanks to a covering of fable, has thus brought forth eternal fruits."[1] Now in all this, our philosophic moralist attempts to establish the monstrous principle, that moral success cannot be achieved in our world except by the union of the false with the true! Akin to this is the following. Speaking of Christ's "belief in the special action of God, which, among the vulgar," he says, "led to a foolish credulity, with Him," he remarks, "it led to a profound idea of the familiar relations of man with God, and an exaggerated belief in the power of man—beautiful errors, which were the secret of His power."[2] An original genius truly is M. Renan. It is the first time that we have ever seen "error" set forth as "the secret of power." We have always understood philosophy to teach that "truth," the discovery of truth in nature, is "the secret of power," and that theology teaches the same in grace. We must give our fine-spun sentimentalist credit, however, for limiting the "secret of power" to "*beautiful* errors."

"During His last days," Renan continues, "the enormous weight of the mission He had accepted pressed cruelly upon Jesus," and he is in doubt as to whether He did not "curse the hard destiny which had denied Him the joys conceded to all others." But after speaking of a "melancholy experience of doubt, trouble, and terror," that He underwent in prospect of "death, which sought to persuade Him that all had been in vain," he represents Him as suddenly becoming "entirely Himself;" again, "His character unclouded, the subtleties of the polemic, the credulity of the thaumaturgus and of the exorcist, forgotten. Love for His work sustained Him. He was willing to drink the cup to the dregs."[3] Strange intermixture of truth with error, this. Love His

[1] Page 204. [2] Page 60. [3] Page 262.

mission Jesus did, but "curse His hard destiny," in having accepted it, He did not. He freely gave Himself up for us all, drank the bitter cup of God's wrath to the dregs, and then with His expiring breath exclaimed, "It is finished!" Ah! Renan, Renan! You are in a pitiable case, indeed! Would that I could wake you up, and all who are like-minded with you. Would that I could wake you up to a sense of your dreadful and most imminent danger, and convince you that unless you have a saving interest in the death and intercession of Him whom you have so wickedly falsified, however outwardly correct and blameless your deportment towards your fellow-man may have been, you will "die as the fool dieth," and become thenceforth, according to the declaration of Christ, a miserable outcast from God for ever. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." A man may be sincere in "sowing," as the Scripture puts it, "to the wind," but since the blindness of sincerity in delusion has happened to him through his sin, God will be just in causing him to "reap the whirlwind." Such as are "willingly ignorant, denying the only Lord that bought them," etc., may read their character described in the following words of the Apostle: "They walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." When men really believe a thing, whatever it may be, they must be sincere in their belief; but as Jesus assures us that the belief of "the truth" in religion can alone make man "free," those who "believe a lie," as God puts it, with regard to His saving truth, however sincere they may be in it, must necessarily be in "bondage" still. They still remain under the dominion

of sin and error, and since it was primarily their hatred to the saving truths of the Bible that led to their blindness and security in unbelief, God is therefore just, as He represents Himself to be, in dooming them to the place prepared for the "father of lies," whose children they are.

CHAPTER IV.

Character and Teaching of Jesus.

RENAN'S delusion is astonishing. Never was the spiritual vision of blind and infatuated Jew more beclouded, in reading the Scriptures, by the impenetrable veil of unbelief, than is that of M. Renan. He seems to misunderstand, misrepresent, and defile almost everything he touches. His conceits, to which we have been referring, about the gradual transformation of Christ's character, and the comparative decadence of His great moral nature during the period of its public development, as based upon His being, first the moralist, then the miracle-worker, and lastly the disappointed and passionate denunciator, caused by His contact with an opposing world, are all mere whimsical fancies for which there is not the least shadow of foundation in the Gospels. He was the Divine Moralist to the end, as everyone who has eyes to see, may see by consulting the Gospel records. And as to miracles, and what Renan's school regards as harsh utterances: the former were performed, and the latter were given utterance to, from the very first of Christ's public career.[1] There was no change in Himself in this respect; circumstances drew Him out more fully in his denunciations of sin and wickedness upon some occasions than upon others, it is true; but even in his strongest denunciatory utterances against sin and sinners, so far from its being symptomatic of a decaying moral nature,

[1] See Mark i. 23 and following; John ii.; Matt. v. 20; and vii. 5, 6, 15.

as Renan absurdly supposes, the moral heroism of his nature is hereby made to shine but the more lustrously—it is among the surest indications of the existence of a great moral nature, and of its most legitimate and normal development.

Referring to the circumstances recorded in Mark xi., in reference to our Lord cursing the fruitless fig tree, Renan says: "His displeasure sometimes led Him to commit inexplicable and apparently absurd acts."[1] To which we reply, none of His acts were "absurd." His object in cursing the fig tree in the presence of His disciples was to teach them a lesson of "faith in God." It was also an additional exemplification of His Divine power, showing to His disciples, and through them to those "who should afterwards believe in Him, through their word," that the vegetable as well as the other kingdoms of nature, was entirely subject to His control. He by Whom both vegetable and animal life is sustained, has but to speak the word and life becomes extinct. It was, doubtless, to exhibit His Divine and unlimited power, that the supernatural manifestations of it were thus varied. Does He wish to make manifest the supernatural power by which he reads the hearts of his auditors? "Jesus knowing their thoughts," says to them, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts."[2] Does He wish to manifest the supernatural power by which He is able to describe distant objects? He at one time directs His disciples to a distant place, where, He tells them, they will find a colt tied and which its owners will allow them to take; at another, ere it is taken from the sea, He discloses to Peter what he should find in the mouth of a fish; and yet, again, when a guest chamber is required in which to prepare the Passover, He says to Peter and John, "Behold, when ye are entered

[1] Page 226. [2] Matt. ix. 4, 5.

into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house . . . and he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready."[1]

In proof of Christ's Divinity, His miraculous power put orth in His own name—"absurd acts," if you please, Renan; but know thou, that "wisdom is justified of her children," whether philosophers understand them or not—His miraculous power, I say, as contradistinguished from that of His apostles by being invariably put forth in His own name, because there was no higher, was exemplified in a multiplicity of ways. At one time He is seen by His disciples walking upon the sea; at another, he commands the wind and the waves to be still, which is immediately followed by a "great calm." Anon, He is converting water into a nutritious and exhilarating beverage; and again, applying His creative power to bread, for the feeding of the famishing multitude. At one time He crowds the nets of the toiling fishermen with abundance of fish; at another, to pay the tribute of Cæsar, a coin is created, or from the mouth of a fish is extracted. At one time He miraculously subdues the wild spirit of the brute, and is found amid the shouting acclamations of a concourse of people, meekly riding on a beast "whereon never man sat;" at another, with authority, He commands the "unclean spirits" in man, and they obey Him. Finally, He is found "healing all manner of sicknesses and diseases among the people," and even restoring to life those who were dead; thus foreshadowing the exercise of His power as "the resurrection and the life," and anticipating the time when, at His command, "all that are in their graves shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation."

[1] Luke xxii. 10-13.

"The idea of an incarnation of God," says M. Renan, "was entirely foreign to the Jewish mind." Then they must have read the Old Testament writings which were in their possession, as Renan reads the New, with a veil over their eyes, or they would have known it from references made to it in such passages as these: "Smite the shepherd, the man that is *my fellow*.[1] Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.[2] Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulders; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His Government and peace there shall be no end."[3] How literally all this has been fulfilled in the person of Christ as "*the Son of God*," and the "*Immanuel, God with us*,"[4] of the Gospels which Renan terms the "Synoptics," but in which, he says, he can discover "no trace of it!" Also, in Him, our "Redeemer, whose goings have been from everlasting,"[5] as the "God made flesh, who dwelt among us, and by whom all things were created,"[6] of John's Gospel. And lastly, in the "God manifested in the flesh," of the Epistles. "Facts are stubborn things:" all this, and much more to the same effect, under God, came to us from the Jewish mind; and "the idea of an incarnation of God" could not therefore have been "foreign to the Jewish mind." But, "Even in the Gospel of John," Renan further remarks, "the accusation that He made Himself God, is presented as a calumny of the Jews—John v. 18; x. 33." How readest thou, Renan? It is not presented there as a calumny, but rather as an inference legitimately drawn

[1] Zec. xiii. 7. [2] Isaiah vii. 14. [3] Isaiah ix. 6.
[4] Matt. i. 23; Mark i. 1; Luke i. 35.
[5] Isaiah lxiii. 16; and Mic. v. 2. [6] John i. 1 14.

from the remarks Christ had been making respecting the intimate relation He sustained to the Father.

"He did not preach His opinions, He preached Himself," remarks Renan. But passing over the obvious fact that in preaching "Himself," He must necessarily have preached "His opinions," or, in other words, Scripture or New Testament *doctrine*—in what sense, we ask, did He preach Himself? "To be the Son of God," Renan replies. And in what sense was such preaching understood, first, by His enemies? Why, that He preached Himself "God;" and hence the accusation of blasphemy, to which we have just alluded—"because Thou being a man, makest Thyself God." His enemies brought the same charge against Him in accusing Him before Pilate—(John xix. 7). Secondly, in what sense did His friends and disciples understand the expression, "Son of God?" Without a single recorded exception, we answer, in the sense conveyed by the terms, "My Lord and my God,"[1] of Thomas; "the true God and eternal life,"[2] of John; "the only wise God," of Jude; and the "of Whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed for ever,"[3] of Paul. These and many other similar passages show conclusively that they understood the title "Son of God" by which Christ designated Himself, to be expressive of His Divinity, and that, therefore, it was "no robbery" in Him to claim "to be equal with God."

We have thus the concurrence of both friends and foes, inspired and uninspired men, without a single recorded dissentient, that by His own teaching Christ claimed to be God, equal with the Father. And does not His language, properly understood, as recorded in many parts of the New Testament, truly convey this idea. If Christ did not preach

[1] John xx. 28. [2] 1 John v. 20. [3] Rom. ix. 5.

His Divinity, if He did not mean to convey the idea that He was God in the highest sense of the term, possessing all the essential attributes of Deity, what are we to understand by such passages as the following. Not only did He in the style of the sovereign utterances of the Deity, assert that He was greater than John, than Solomon, than Jonas, than the temple, than the greatest of the prophets; that He was the Lord of the Sabbath; that He was before Abraham; that He had glory with the Father before the world was; that He "came down from heaven, and forth from God;" but He also asserted that He was One with the Father—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.[1] I and My Father are One.[2] As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father.[3] No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him.[4] As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."[5] And to the Jews who required a sign as to His Messiahship, He said—"Destroy this temple [meaning His body], and in three days *I* will raise it up."[6] Also, "I lay down My life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and *I have power to take it* again.[7]

In perfect consistency with St. Paul's account of Him "in whom we have redemption," as being "before all things, and by whom all things consist," Christ claims unlimited possession and equal proprietorship with the Father: "All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine."[8] "All that

[1] John v. 17. [2] John x. 30. [3] John x. 15. [4] Matt. xi. 27.
[5] John v. 21, 23. [6] John ii. 19. [7] John x. 17, 18. [8] John xvii. 10.

the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you."[1]

Jesus also asserts His Omnipresence: "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."[2] "Whereso-ever two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them."[3] That is, actually, personally in their midst; for He says again: "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and *will manifest Myself to him.* And *we* will come unto him, and make *our abode with him.*"[4]

On page 181 Renan confounds the terms, "*a* son of God" with "*the* Son of God," as though they were synonymous; instead of which the distinction between them is clearly represented in Scripture as being infinite, the latter—which in contradistinction from "a son," or "sons of God," is the *only* begotten of the Father—being made synonymous with the name of God Himself. Luke intimates that Christ was called "the Son of God" simply in reference to His having been begotten of the Holy Ghost, and to His being therefore God incarnate.[5] Christ who, as we have seen, not only calls Himself "the Son of God," but claims oneness and equal honour with God, says as to His pre-existence in the bosom of the Father: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father."[6] And John says of Him: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."[7] Who came unto his own? A being that had no previous existence, according to Renan's assumption that He was merely human; but ownership could not have preceded existence, and yet they were His own. The Jewish nation had been

[1] John xvi. 15. [2] Matt. xxviii 20. [3] Matt. xviii. 20.
[4] John xiv. 21, 23. [5] Luke i. 35. [6] John xvi. 28. [7] John i. 11.

God's own people as the chosen depositors of the revelations He had made to man for generations past; and of Him therefore it is said, "He came unto His own." Of God, and God alone, such language could have been written; and as Christ is the Person to whom it refers, as having come, Jesus Christ is therefore God.

As the book of Revelation is canonical, we are, of course, at liberty to quote from it; and as a believer in the supernatural on the authority of ample testimony, we are at liberty to quote Christ's words uttered after His resurrection. In the last chapter of this book, the Lord God and the Lamb in unity are said to be the Temple and the Light of Heaven; and v. 6, in connection with v. 16, proves Jesus to have been the Lord God of the holy prophets. In chapter ii. 8, Jesus connects His Divinity with His humanity by asserting that He "which was dead and is alive," is "the first and the last." And in chapter i. v. 8, in connection with verses 11, 17, 18, this same Jesus declares Himself to be "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." The Apostle Paul, in like manner, connects His Divinity with His humanity in the passage—"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church *of God*, which he hath purchased with *His own blood*."[1]

The worship of angels is forbidden (Col. ii. 18); but Christ allowed, and required, His disciples to pay Him Divine homage and worship. They "honoured Him even as they honoured the Father, as they had been taught by Himself to do:—"Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying, of a truth Thou art the Son

[1] Acts xx. 28.

of God."[1] After His resurrection also, we find them still worshipping Him :—"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed to meet them. And when they saw Him they worshipped Him."[2] And hence it is, that being encouraged by Christ, and therefore right, they continued to worship Him after His ascension :—"And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."[3] Hence also it is that we read of His being worshipped by the angels, and the twenty-four elders who fell down before "the Lamb," and worshipped Him as the supreme God "that liveth for ever and ever." Now in Christ's rebuke to the Tempter in the wilderness, He teaches us that God alone is to be worshipped ; and by sanctioning and encouraging the worship of Himself, therefore, He clearly teaches that He is Himself God—"the great, the only wise, and true God," as Jude, Paul, and John, declare Him to be.

The Glorious Personage whom Paul in his Epistle to Titus styles—"the great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ,"[4] and whose "glorious appearing," he says, we are to look for, Christ Himself, assuming the lowlier title of "Son of Man," represents as the sovereign Ruler of angels and supreme Judge of men :—"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory ; and before Him shall be gathered all nations ; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."[5] And in Rev. ii. 18, 23, under the title of "Son of God," as an essential qualification for the Supreme Judge-

[1] Matt. xiv. 33. [2] Matt. xxviii. 16, 17. [3] Luke xxiv. 51, 52.
[4] Titus ii. 10, 13. [5] Matt. xxv. 31, 32.

ship he asserts His Omniscience :—"These things says the Son of God . . . and all the Churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give to every one of you according to your works" Speaking of Jesus as the "first-begotten" of God, it is written in chapter i. of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, "Let all the angels of God worship Him;" and in chapter i. of his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul represents these "*angels of God*" as belonging to the Lord Jesus :—"When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with *His mighty angels*, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." Christ Himself also, as recorded in Matt. xiii. 41, and in Rev. xxii. 16, claims them as His :—"The Son of Man shall send forth *His angels*, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." "I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches." Now in the Apostle's ascribing to Him equal sovereign proprietorship in the angels with the Father, and His claiming it also for Himself, Christ's Divinity is clearly set forth.

"Who can forgive sins but God only?" said certain Jewish Scribes. Christ's reply was, not that any one less than God had a right to do it, but, "that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house."[1] He had a right to thus exercise this Divine prerogative in His

[1] Mark ii. 10, 11.

own name, solely because He was the Divine person who, as He tells us, gave His "life a ransom for many, His flesh for the life of the world?"[1] thus making His one life, being coupled with the Infinite, to outweigh the lives of the collective myriads born since the world began. Hence also the declaration of our Lord, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."[2]

Jesus never rebuked His disciples for addressing Him in the use of such expressions as implied His Divinity, such as "My Lord and my God;" "Thou *knowest all things*, Thou knowest that I love Thee;" and upon one occasion He said to them: "Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am." And when one of the nine lepers whom He had healed "fell down on His face at His feet giving Him thanks," Jesus represents this act of grateful devotion to Himself as giving "glory to God."[3]

Christ invariably wrought His miracles in His own name; the disciples also performed them in His name, power to perform which they received direct from Himself.[4] Now such power can belong to no being less than God, the Author of nature and Controller of its laws. Christ's sovereign and authoritative style in the performance of His miracles was invariably, "Peace, be still. *I will*, be thou clean. I command thee to come out of him. Be whole of thy sickness. Young man, I say unto thee, arise. Lazarus, come forth." Very different this sovereign and authoritative style from that of the Apostles: "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. . . . Why marvel ye at this," he remarks to the wondering Jews, "as though by our own power or holiness

[1] Matt. xx. 28; John vi. 51. [2] John viii. 24. [3] Luke xvii. 16, 18.
[4] Matt. x. 1.

we had made this man to walk? Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and killed the Prince of life, and His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea the faith which is by Him hath given Him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."[1] Again, to a "certain man named Eneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy, Peter said, Eneas, *Jesus Christ maketh thee whole:* arise and make thy bed :—And he arose immediately."[2] Lo also, Paul "turned and said to the Spirit, I command thee *in the name of Jesus Christ* to come out of her."[3] Because Moses failed to recognize God, and sanctify Him before the people as the Being by whose immediate power alone miracles are wrought, he was rebuked and severely punished.[4] No such rebuke however, is addressed to Christ, and for the alone reason that being Himself God, performing miracles in His own name was performing them in the name of the Deity.

"Jesus never pretended to have created the world," says Renan. He professed identity with the Deity, oneness with God, we reply, sharing the Father's glory with Him "before the world was;" and the apostle Paul tells us that this glory consisted in part in the creation and the possession of the world and all things—"All things were created by Him and for Him." So also St. John :—"He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."[6] Christ also takes to Himself the glory of being the resurrection and the life: "I am the resurrection and the life,"[7] said He to Martha. Now the resurrection of the body is undeniably equal to its creation. Indeed, it may be said to be its creation. The

[1] Acts iii. 6—16. [2] Acts ix. 34. [3] Acts xvi. 18. [4] Num. xx. 12.
[5] Col. i. 16. [6] John i. 3-10. [7] John xi. 25.

body after being reduced to its original element "dust," is re-created, re-animated, and restored to its original connection with the Spirit, receiving, at the same time, the principle or quality by which its endless existence, either in a state of happiness or misery, will be secured.

Being man, however, as well as God, He was of course inferior to the Father in His human nature, and in the humiliating though glorious office which He sustained in connection with the redemption of the world; and hence the consistency and reasonableness of those passages which, in this sense, assert or imply Christ's inferiority to the Father. As the man, Christ Jesus, He could say, "The Son can do nothing of Himself. But the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." That is to say, it is not the human nature which you see and have intercourse with that performeth the works; it is the Father—whom you regard as the Divinity—it is the Father, the Divinity within Me, that "doeth the works." And in like manner where He says, "Ye should rejoice because I said I go unto My Father, for My Father is greater than I," it does not nullify or contradict what He had before said as to His *oneness* with the Father, originally sharing His glory, and claiming that men ought therefore to honour Him even as they honour the Father; but. He simply intimates hereby, that the Father as seated upon the throne of heaven is greater in glory and blessedness than He in His present state of humiliation as God the Son suffering for the sins of the world. It should, therefore, He intimates, be cause for rejoicing to His disciples, that He was about to return again to the bosom of the Father, to be a partaker with Him of His glory, and which it was His will that they also, in due time, should come and behold.

There is absolutely nothing written throughout the inspired volume expressive of the Father's Deity, that is not written of the Son. Mysterious as it may appear, they are represented as *one* in eternal and uncreated supremacy, the Author alike of universal nature, and characterized alike, without a single variation, by the same Divine titles and attributes. So intimate is the union between them in all that is essential to Deity, that Christ is even designated the Father, "the everlasting Father," (Isaiah 9–6) as well as the Son. And to Philip, who expressed a desire to see the Father, Christ said, "Have I been so long a time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, show us the Father."[1] In one sense, He is Father; in another, the Son. As God and creator of mankind, He is the Father of us all; as the Son clothing Himself with humanity, and in this assumed and created nature obeying, doing, and suffering, the will of the uncreated with regard to our fallen world, He is to be regarded as our Saviour, Brother, Friend. But He is none the less God because of this display of infinite goodness and condescension in thus with a view to our instruction, redemption, and ultimate salvation, tabernacling for a time among men, and manifesting Himself to us through a human form. Though a man, He was still by virtue of the fulness of the Godhead within Him, as it was written of Him, "the Lord of glory, having all power in heaven and earth." And hence it is that—Christ having thus a claim in the fullest and most absolute sense of the term to equality with the Father—we read also, in the following words, of His having associated Himself as the Second person of a Divine Triune:—"Go ye and teach all nations,

[1] John xiv. 9.

baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," hereby proclaiming in unmistakable terms His essential and absolute oneness with the Deity.

In proving the Divinity of Christ, to confine myself as I have done, by way of reply to Renan, chiefly to the words and teaching of Jesus on the subject, I have been labouring at a manifest disadvantage. To have proved it from the Epistles and the Scriptures generally, in connection with the Gospels, would have greatly multiplied the evidence, and therefore rendered the argument in its favour still more conclusive. This will not be denied. But the candid reader will, nevertheless, it is believed, have observed in the foregoing abundant evidence in proof of this all-important Scriptural doctrine.

In M. Renan's frequent reference to what he styles "the favourite phrase of Jesus"—"the Kingdom of God"—has he overlooked the fact, we may ask in conclusion, that Jesus also called it *His* Kingdom?—"My Kingdom is not of this world,"[1] He said; thus again, by His asserted unity of possession with the Father, making good His claim to the title "God Incarnate." Paul so understood Him, and likewise associates Him with the Deity in its possession: "No unclean person, covetous man," &c., he writes, "hath any inheritance in the Kingdom *of Christ* and *of God*."[2]—How readest thou, Renan? "Blind leaders of the blind," are very apt, as Christ says of them, to fall, with those they would lead, into the ditch. You must read again, and then perhaps things will appear that have hitherto escaped your notice. In the language of Him you so much admire, I would say, "Search the Scriptures," not only of the New Testament, but also of the Old; for it was to those He alluded, they being the only Scriptures in existence at the

[1] John. xviii. 36. [2] Eph. v. 5.

time. In them as well as in the New, are contained "the words of eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me," Jesus says. Now don't say, "This is false; they did not really testify of Him." Do not, as you are wont, make your hero a liar, by saying that He knew better, but that He was guilty of this fraud, this "evil, that good might come"—whose damnation, according to the Apostle, is just. This were to subvert his own teaching, and prove himself destitute of the morality be inculcates. Rather fear for yourself, and for your school that has imbibed such principles; and allow the sentence of Paul, whom you call "a true son of God," to ring in your ears until it shall have produced saving effects—"whose damnation is just."

But whatever you do, if only for consistency's sake, do not thus mar the character of Him whose life you have been endeavouring to adorn with your gifted pen—whose life you have studied to honour by endeavouring to paint it in a manner more in conformity with the freethinking rationalism of modern gentlemen. Do not, I say, for although you would win the applause of philosophers, "the great, the noble, and the wise" of the earth,—the lowly ones whom you aver Christ did not despise, and who hunger for the pure bread of life alone, may be injured by it. Besides, the great and wise ones of the earth, you will perceive, can be in no need of a picture painted and varnished by a Renan, as they are capable of applying such a colouring as they may severally desire, for themselves. But the humble and the lowly whose tastes do not lead them to aspire to anything beyond the unadulterated truth, cannot of course feel at home among such aristocratic polish. Be merciful therefore, even as our Father in heaven is merciful, and deny not to the famishing multitude the bread of life as Christ

Himself dispensed it to them. When you make a feast, be it intellectual or otherwise, and call the rich, the great, and the noble, do not forget the teaching of Jesus upon the subject; nor that, even proportionately to their numbers, the rich and the noble are, "according to the calling of God," greatly in the minority; and this doubtless because their proud natures prompt them to so far overstep the boundary of pure truth, that their free-thinking wisdom becomes folly in the sight of Him whose judgment is perfect.

CHAPTER V.

The Church and an Instituted Form of Worship.

THE visible Church is a Divine institution, the Divinely appointed repository of all that is sacred and holy. It is represented in Scripture as God's "building, an holy temple in the Lord, and the pillar and ground of the truth;" and as it is God's own in a most peculiar and emphatic sense, having been redeemed and "purchased with His own blood," the blood of Him Who was "God manifested in the flesh," so it has the special promise of His unceasing care, protection, and blessing. Men, therefore, who think they can live as holy, and die as safely, without the pale of the Church, as they can by living and dying within its communion, are deluded. As well think that a wayward, erring child would be likely to live as morally, and be as safe from vicious contamination while disobediently wandering away into the world from the sanctuary of home, and beyond the reach of the benign influence of parental love and authority. Christ, Who is the head of the Church Militant, has given commandments relative to its extension and establishment in the earth, and requires all who would be His disciples to enter its pale, and show to the world their badge of discipleship by becoming self-denying, fearless, and consistent "soldiers of the Cross." The sentiment of respect, veneration, and homage, which we have, or should

have, for the Deity, must, according to divine requirement, be evidenced by external acts of worship. And to the intelligent and candid reader of the Scriptures, as a revelation from God, this must appear a most obvious duty. All the promises of God in Christ, relative to Divine influence and saving grace, are made to those who are willing to deny themselves, renounce the spirit and fashions of the world, follow Christ, and enter His fold, the Church. But there is not a particle of Scriptural ground for the belief, that they are made to those who choose to remain without, practically despising the commandment of God, in "neglecting the assembling of themselves together," refusing to "come out from the world and be separate," and slighting the Divinely appointed ordinances and sacraments; thereby showing that they prefer the maxims and friendship of the world to the observance of God's law; that they have no heart sympathy with the truly religious; and that they are, therefore "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."[1]

Another consideration—which is of the utmost importance to the secular state—is, that church-going people will be found in general to be a law-abiding people, and the best of citizens. The Sabbath, and an instituted form of public worship, are the most effectual support of virtue's cause and the public morals, and should, therefore, irrespective of their spiritual and primary design, be regarded as indispensable pillars of State. In the mere interest of State policy alone it should be looked upon as a grand and a necessary institution, not to be lightly set by and despised, as advocated by M. Renan, but being essential alike to national and individual prosperity and well-being, to be encouraged and

[1] Eph. ii. 12.

steadfastly guarded by the ruling secular authorities. The influence for good of this sacred institution is incalculable. It has raised the standard of morals, and diffused the holy principles of religion throughout the world. It gives sacredness and binding effect to the legal oath, and otherwise aids in the administration of justice. It affords means for the collective offering of "prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks," which Scripture examples and promises assure us are not without effect in averting national calamity, and in drawing down the Divine blessing upon the communities or nations on whose behalf such united supplications are offered. In short, its tendency is to promote national and individual piety, learning, benevolence, patriotism, and enlightened zeal in the performance of every good word and work.

Renan does not deny that the worship of the Deity is necessary. He takes no objection to the declaration of Christ, "It is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God," provided it be done in a solitary or private manner; but to every form of *public* worship he appears to have a decided antipathy. Strange that a man of his abilities should question its utility, even though as an unbeliever in a Divine revelation, he should call into question the absolute necessity of it. No one who takes the Bible for his guide, however, can for a moment question this. Omitting the numerous precepts relative to the "solemn assemblies" of the Jews, we need but quote a passage or two from the Psalms to show that public worship was required and observed under the Old Testament dispensation; and a few from the New Testament to show that it was likewise required and observed in Apostolic times: "God is to be feared in the *assembly* of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all

them that are about Him.[1] Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in His sanctuary.[2] Enter into His gates with thanks, and into *His courts* with praise.[3] Let them exalt Him also in *the congregation* of the people, and praise Him in *the assembly* of the elders.[4] I will declare Thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of *the congregation* will I praise Thee.[5] I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in *the assembly* of the upright, and in *the congregation*."[6] The Psalmist in these declarations and exhortations relative to public worship, but illustrates and enforces the precept long before given: "Ye shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary: I am the Lord."[7]

In the New Testament, there are not only general precepts bearing upon the subject, such as "I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty;"[8] but there are also many passages which prove conclusively that it was customary for the apostles and early disciples to regularly meet for public worship; as for example, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking *the assembling of ourselves together* as the manner of some is."[9] "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath Days, reasoned with them out of the Scriptures.[10] And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogues, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.[11] And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people.[12] And he reasoned in

[1] Ps. lxxxix. 7. [2] Ps. cl. 1. [3] Ps. c. 4. [4] Ps. cvii. 32.
[5] Ps. xxii. 22. [6] Ps. cxi. 1. [7] Lev. xxvi. 2. [8] 1 Tim. i. 2.
[9] Heb. x. 24, 25. [10] Acts xvii. 2. [11] Acts xiii. 42. [12] Acts xi. 26.

the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.[1] And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."[2]

It may also be proved from the directions given in reference to ministerial qualifications, duties, and authority: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, Who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful *putting me into the ministry*.[3] But hath in due time manifested His Word *through preaching*, which is committed unto me according to *the commandment of God our Saviour*.[4] As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.[5] A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; Holding fast the faithful Word as he hath been taught, that he may be able *by sound doctrine both to exhort* and to convince the gainsayers.[6] The things that thou hast heard of Me among many witnesses, the same *commit thou to faithful men*, who shall be able *to teach* others also.[7] Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they *who labour in word and doctrine.* For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and the labourer is worthy of his reward?[8] Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, *to feed the Church of God*, which He hath purchased with His own blood.[9] Obey them *that have the rule over you*, and submit yourselves: for *they watch for your souls*, as they that must

[1] Acts xviii. 4. [2] 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. [3] 1 Tim. i. 12. [4] Tit. i. 3.
[5] Acts. xiii. 2. [6] Tit. i. 7, 9. [7] 2 Tim. ii. 2. [8] 1 Tim. v. 17, 18.
[9] Acts xx. 28.

give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."[1]

Many examples of assembling also for social prayer might be cited, as in Acts i. 24; iv. 23, and following; xii. 5, 12; and xx. 7, 36. The 11th chapter of 1st Corinthians, shows that it was customary for the brethren to "come together in the church," and to "keep the ordinances" as they were "delivered to them." In 1 Cor. xiv., Paul gives special directions in reference to public worship; and in 2 Thess. iii. 1, 2, he calls upon "the brethren" in a collective capacity to pray for himself and those who were with him, "that the word of the Lord might have free course and be glorified," and that they might "be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith."

Such is the plain, unequivocal, and invariable teaching, testimony, and example of the prophets and apostles on the all-important subject of public and social worship; but Jesus, Renan says, taught differently. Speaking of the "maxims of exalted charity" which Jesus taught, he says: "A pure worship, a religion without priests and external observances, was the result of these principles."[2] Not so, Renan, Christ Himself ordained apostles, and ministers, or "priests," if you please, "that He might send them forth to preach."[3] And you greatly err in saying that the religion and worship which Jesus established was "without external observances," and that "never was there a greater enemy to forms" than He. Besides sending forth many of His disciples to preach to public assemblies[4] while yet a preacher of the Gospel Himself, did He not promise to be with the preachers and ministers of His Word, "even to the

[1] Heb. xiii. 17. [2] Page 87. [3] Mark iii. 14.
[4] Luke ix. 2, and x. i.; Matt. ix. 35.

end of the world"? and also that, "Wheresoever two or three" were gathered together in His name, for social worship, there would He be in the midst of them? And did He not Himself, by personal example, sanction and encourage formal or "external observances" in religion by preaching from time to time in the synagogues, and so regularly, or frequently, that it is said to have been "His custom"?[1] By preaching in private houses also?—Mark ii. 1, 2.

Meeting for public worship, then, in the Jewish church edifices called synagogues, was thus clearly sanctioned by our Lord, a description of which, both as to building and mode of worship, M. Renan thus gives: "At that time each town had its synagogue, or place of meeting. This was a rectangular room, rather small, with a portico, decorated in the Greek style. The remains of many ancient synagogues still exist in Galilee. They are all constructed of large and good materials. In the interior there were seats, a chair for public reading, and a closet to contain the sacred rolls. These edifices were the centre of the whole Jewish life. There the people assembled on the Sabbath for prayer, and reading of the Law and the Prophets. As Judaism, except in Jerusalem, had, properly speaking, no clergy, the first comer stood up,[2] gave the lessons of the day, and added thereto a *midrash*, or entirely personal commentary, in which he expressed his own ideas. This was the origin of the 'homily.' It had a president, elders, a recognized reader or apparitor, deputies, who were secretaries or messengers, and conducted the correspondence

[1] Matt. iv. 23; Luke iv. 16, and xliii. 44.

[2] This is not correct. "Each synagogue had rulers, whose business it was to *appoint* the reader, and to permit *any fit persons* (not the first comer) to give an exhortation; upon which latter practice the *sermons* of the Christian Church were grounded."

between one synagogue and another, a *shammash*, or sacristan. The synagogues were thus really little independent republics, having an extensive jurisdiction."

And in these synagogues, which Renan says "had nothing of the character of a temple," public worship, as we have seen, was performed by our Lord and His Apostles. But whatever may be said as to their having sanctioned the public worship of God in the Jewish *Synagogue*, Renan says, when "the religion of humanity, established not upon blood, but upon the heart, was founded [by Jesus], the *temple* was rendered useless, and was irrevocably condemned."[1] Well, as to that, we presume that "the religion of humanity, and of the heart," may be developed within the walls of a temple as well as anywhere else, and that God may there, as elsewhere, be worshipped "in spirit and in truth." "Wheresoever" is the word of Christ in reference to a place of acceptable worship. And as to the spiritual worship of the temple, and of the observance of some form as a means to this end, being "irrevocably condemned" by Christ, did He not Himself at different times enter, preach, and conduct public worship in the temple at Jerusalem, calling it upon one occasion the House of God and of prayer?[2] Did He not also, in reply to His enemies, say, "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, *and in the temple*, whither the Jews always resort"?[3] And were not His disciples, whom He commanded to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be "endued with power from on high," from that time "continually in the temple, praising and blessing God," both before and after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them on the day of Pentecost?[4] And is it not moreover recorded, that "Peter

[1] Page 169. [2] Matt. xxi. 13. [3] John xviii. 20.
[4] Luke xxiv. 41, 53; Acts ii. 46.

and the other Apostles" were commanded by the "angel of the Lord" to "Go stand and speak *in the temple* to the people all the words of this life;" and that, "daily *in the temple*, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ?"[1] and this, too, after Christ's resurrection and ascension; so that public worship in the temple, or house of God of whatever name, has, under the Christian dispensation, clearly the sanction of the Holy Ghost, of Christ, and of all the Apostles.

Renan may dispute that the Holy Ghost has sanctioned such worship, since this involves the supernatural; but since to dispute everything touching the supernatural without the least argument to sustain him, is his uniform practice, we need here say no more on this point, than that he has already admitted the authenticity of the book which contains a record of the fact. But to make a distinction, however, in this connection, between the temple, synagogue, or any other building, as a place of worship, were but to quibble. The character of the building is not to the point; nor is the particular form or mode in which public worship is observed, which may be varied according to circumstances, as it was by the Apostles themselves. Sometimes they worshipped in the synagogues and in the temple; at other times, in private houses; and again, in the open air. The question under consideration is, Was *public* no less than private worship sanctioned by Christ and His Apostles, both by precept and example? This being demonstrated from the Scriptures, the question is at rest.

But M. Renan, it appears, can see no good in these public observances. "An absolutely new idea," he remarks, "the idea of a worship founded on purity of heart, and on human brotherhood, through Him [Jesus] entering into the

[1] Acts v. 20, 42.

world," and "since God only sees the heart," he says, "of what good are these purifications, these observances relating only to the body." If the purifications and observances here referred to are Baptism and the Eucharist, I reply, these are but part of the public observances required at the hands of the Christian; the other observances, to which we have already referred, such as congregational singing, prayer, reading and expounding the Scriptures, &c., do not relate only to the body; nor, indeed, do the former, since they have a spiritual signification. And as to the "good" referred to, there certainly is "good" in the observance of Christian Baptism and the Eucharist, since they were both instituted by Jesus Himself—the one, as an outward sign (by an application of the cleansing element, water) of inward purity of heart, effected by the Holy Ghost through faith in the all-cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ; and the other, as a loving memorial, or token, in commemoration of Christ's sufferings and death. There *is* "good" in them, we say, inasmuch as there is good, and great good, in keeping any and all of the commandments of Christ; for "he that keepeth My commandments," says Jesus, "he it is that loveth Me."[1]

And as to "a worship founded on purity of heart" being "an absolutely new idea," entering the world with the advent of Christ, what, then, are we to make of the religion founded, thousands of years before, on the Commandments which Christ Himself describes as the sum of the Law and the Prophets?—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."[2] Does M. Renan think that this does not include purity of

[1] John xiv. 21. [2] Matt. xxii. 39, 40; Deut. vi. 5.

heart? The religion of the Bible is all heart work, whether M. Renan understands it or not, from the observance of the "first and greatest Commandment," to that which requires the performance of the simplest duty of every-day life. The councils and teachings of God in reference to man's moral condition and attainment, all relate to the heart, from the beginning of Genesis, where it was declared to Adam that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, and to Cain, that sin need not henceforth have dominion over him (Gen. iv. 7), to the end of Revelations, where it is written in reference to the state of the heart when probation ends—"He that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

God's ancient people, who were in possession of "the Law and the Prophets," were not so ignorant of the teachings relating to heart purity, as Renan supposes. David evidently knew something about it when he prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts."[1] And again—"Create in me a clean heart, and renew within me a right spirit. Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom."[2] Nor was he ignorant as to whom the secret of its true attainment is with:—"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall He teach in the way that he shall choose. *The meek* will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach his way."[3] Nor was he ignorant of the fact, that in order to its attainment the *whole heart* must be engaged, in accordance with the promise made to God's ancient people:—"Ye shall seek Me and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your

[1] Psalm cxxxix. 23. [2] Psalm li. 6, 10. [3] Psalm xxv. 12, 14.

heart."[1] "As the hart panteth after the waterbrook," says David, "so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." Nor was he ignorant of the practical results of such heart purity :— "Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellors. Thou, through Thy commandments, hast made me wiser than mine enemies : for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers : for Thy testimonies are my meditation. How sweet are Thy words unto my taste; yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth ! Therefore I love Thy commandments above gold ; yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way."[2]

Nor was this "absolutely new idea" known to David alone; for the children of Israel were all early made acquainted with it,—all knew that purity or holiness of heart was required of them, seeing that God's command to them was : "Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy ;" and that, "The Lord seeth not as man seeth, " for while "man looketh on the outward appearance, the Lord looketh on the heart;"[3] also, that they were taught to remember that "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him."[4] And were they not taught as far back as Moses, that heart purity was their privilege ? He made it a point as the prophet of God and leader of His people, to frequently lay before them that God required the love and service of the heart—that they should love Him with all their heart and serve Him with all their strength. And upon one occasion his words to them were : "Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in His ways, and to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and to hearken unto His

[1] Jer. xxix. 13. [2] Psalm cxix. [3] Sam. xvi. 7. [4] 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

voice: And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be His peculiar people, as He hath promised thee, and that thou should'st keep all His commandments; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as He hath spoken. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."[1] To this intent also, the Holy Spirit is said to have been given them: "Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them;"[2] and hence also the prayer of an Old Testament Saint: "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."[3]

Those who, in accordance with the exhortation of Isaiah,[4] had *purified their hearts* and made them "clean," through faith in the word of God and the promise of His circumcising grace—those who under the Old Testament dispensation had experienced both pardon and purify as the result of seeking God, under the influence of the Spirit, with "all their heart," could say with Isaiah, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God. I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation."[5] And with David: "He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God."[6] And with Habakkuk: Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."[7] An experience this as deep, rich, and full of Divine unction and grace, as

[1] Deut. xxvi. 17–19, & xxx. 6. [2] Neh. ix. 20.
[3] Psalm li. 11. [4] Isaiah i. 16, 18.
[5] Isaiah xii. 2, and lxi. 10.
[6] Psalm xl. 3. [7] Hab. iii. 17, 18.

it is beautifully expressed; and quite as high in religious attainment as we may expect to meet with under the Christian dispensation. "Pure worship," hen, or a religion, "founded on purity of heart," is an "idea" not so "absolutely new" as M. Renan supposes. It is not peculiar to the Gospels, or the New Testament, but is the religion of the Bible.

The "homily," Renan says, had its origin in Judaism. This is, doubtless, the case. Between the Jewish mode of worship under the Old, and the Apostolic and our own, under the New Testament dispensation, there is in some important respects a striking similarity. Even as far back as Nehemiah, corresponding with our "homilies" or sermons of the present day, it is written: "They read in the book in the law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."[1] Public prayer was offered in both a standing and a kneeling posture:—"And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the Lord; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord's.[2] Elijah, the prophet, came near and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word.[3] And all Judah *stood* before the Lord with their little ones, their wives, and their children. And Jehosaphat *stood* in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord before the new court, and said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not Thou God in heaven? and rulest not Thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in Thine hand is there not power and

[1] Neh. viii. 8. [2] Ex. ix. 29. [3] 1 Kings xviii. 36.

might, so that none is able to withstand Thee? art not Thou our God, Who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before Thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham Thy friend for ever? and they dwelt therein, and have built Thee a sanctuary therein for Thy name, saying, if when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, *we stand* before this house, and in Thy presence (for Thy name is in this house). and cry unto Thee in our affliction, then Thou wilt hear and help," &c.[1] "O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.[2] Solomon . . . kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands towards heaven."[3] Christ, our great exemplar, also prayed in both a kneeling and a standing posture.[4]

Singing—devout, spiritual, singing—has also formed a part of divine worship under both dispensations:—"Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our Salvation. Sing praises to God, sing praises: Sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing ye praises with understanding."[5] "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.[6] I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.[7] Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."[8] It will thus be seen that the harmony

[1] Chron. xx. 5-13. [2] Ps. xcv. 6. [3] 2 Chron. vi. 13. [4] Luke xxii. 41; John xi. 41, 42; and John xvii. 1. [5] Ps. xlvii., xcv., and c. Matt. xxvi. 30. [7] 1 Cor. xiv. 15. [8] Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16.

of sacred song has formed an important devotional exercise under both dispensations of the Church.

It is God Who has attuned our hearts to melody, and it is He who requires that the gift shall be employed in acts of holiest devotion. To social and congregational exercises of this nature, with all the eloquence and eccentricities of a polished enthusiast, a Renan may demur, it is true; but while the children of God will, no doubt, fully appreciate the wisdom that dictated his sentiments on the subject, they will doubtless feel constrained to courteously decline embracing them, on the ground that "the wisdom of man is foolishness with God." And taking it for granted that they cannot be far astray in acting in accordance with the Scriptural truism, "God is wiser than man," they will probably continue to celebrate with holy song the praises of Jehovah, in "the assembly of His saints, and in the congregation, until the period shall arrive when, with one accord, they shall realize the bliss of joining in the general acclaim, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us priests and kings unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

CHAPTER VI.

The Church and an Instituted Form of Worship.

SO unlike the religion and worship which Jesus founded, in Renan's estimation, is the religion and worship of modern times, that we not only, in opposition to Christ's teaching, adhere to "external observances," but the priests, he says, discourage private prayer. "The priest, by his office," he remarks, "ever advocates public sacrifice, of which he is the appointed minister; he discourages private prayer, which has a tendency to dispense with his office."[1] How this may be with French priests of the Romish faith, I know not, but it is well known among all Protestant denominations, that their ministers, who offer no "sacrifices" but those which are spiritual, everywhere exhort the laity to be much engaged in prayer, private as well as public, as being the great means of spiritual life to the believer and to the Church; and also, we may add, the most effectual means of sustaining him happily and successfully in his ministerial "office." Among Dissenting Churches in particular, even the pecuniary support of the ministry depends, in some measure, upon it; as the people's hearts become enlarged, under the influence of the Spirit, in answer to private and public prayer, so do they become more liberal, and more free to respond both to the calls of charity, and to the claims which the ministry has

[1] Page 170.

upon them for pecuniary support. Such, Renan, is the "tendency," at least among Protestants, of the faithful observance of this most sacred of duties; and the religion of that man who does not respond to such calls we may say is unreal—frigid, barren, and lifeless. Private prayer fosters every virtue, charity, benevolence, uprightness—in a word, religion, true religion, which embraces every moral principle, is promoted by it. It should, therefore, rather be regarded as a bulwark of the sacred "office" than as having "a tendency to dispense with it."

Our contributions in support of the Church, we may remark by the way, are not to be regarded as charitable donations which we are free to give or withhold at pleasure, and in either case regard ourselves as equally honest. They are an absolute claim which God has upon us in order to the successful carrying on of His work in the world, which He effects through human instrumentality. Christ commissioned His disciples to go forth and preach His word and doctrine to the world that the world through Him might be saved, and has "ordained," according to the Apostles, that "they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."[1] As the servants of God, specially set apart and appointed to this holy vocation, they were to be accounted by the people unto whom they ministered as "worthy of their reward," and not to be expected to go forth "upon their own charges," which, as a general rule, with the ministerial "labourers sent forth into His vineyard," would be clearly impossible. We may here observe, that being a lay member of the Church, we do not feel the embarrassment in writing on this somewhat delicate subject, that a member of the clergy might be expected to have.

Respecting prayer, Renan further remarks: "Jesus pre-

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 14.

scribes nothing, except that it should proceed from the heart."[1] In this, also, Renan is mistaken. Christ not only commanded prayer in the use of such language as, "Watch and pray; Men ought always to pray;" exhorting them also to pray to their Father in secret, and upon different occasions setting them an example of public and social prayer;[2] but He also gave to His disciples a form of prayer setting forth how God was to be addressed, and designating what they should pray for. And to this same form of prayer Renan elsewhere alludes, by saying: "This high idea of the relations of man with God, of which so few minds, even after Him, have been capable, is summed up in a prayer which He taught to His disciples;"[3] and then he most inconsistently adds, that Christ "insisted particularly upon the idea that the heavenly Father knows better than we what we need, and that we almost *sin against Him* in asking Him for this or that particular thing," referring the reader in proof of his position to Luke xi. 5, and following, where it reads, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find," enumerating, in conjunction with the Lord's prayer in the verses immediately preceding, "particular" things, temporal as well as spiritual—the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God, the forgiveness of sins, our daily bread, preservation from temptation, and deliverance from evil, or the evil one. But, while the fact that our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of such things, does not remove the obligation we are under to "ask, seek, knock," and pray to Him who has declared that He "will be inquired of for these things,"—against vain repetitions hypocritically uttered to be seen of men, Christ raises a warning voice.

Does not prayer itself, a belief in the efficacy of prayer, involve the *supernatural*, indicating the omnipresence of the

[1] Page 170. [2] Luke ix. 28, and xi. 1. [3] Page 89.

eternal Spirit taking cognizance of every individual petition as it is presented, whether for pardon, purity, spiritual help in time of need, or for blessings of a more temporal character? Wherefore else do men pray, and Renan confessedly among the number? He goes further, and even invokes the inspiration and supernatural assistance of a deceased mortal—his sister.[1] But this, like a good many more of his fine-spun periods, I suppose, we are to understand as meaningless utterances—something said, but which has no definite meaning attaching to it; in other words, a bit of his pure idealism! Otherwise it must be regarded as partaking of the superstitious to a degree that we should scarcely have expected in Professor Renan. But this, it seems, is not an uncommon characteristic in his brethren of the *freethinking* faith, as witnesseth the following:—

"It was a lovely evening," says a writer in the *Sunday at Home*, "except that the moon's face was obscured by clouds. It was not, however, of nature that we were conversing; a yet more important subject occupied our attention, in short, a discussion was in progress in regard to the evidences of Divine revelation. My opponent had taken a decided stand against the Divine authority of the Bible. Nay, going back to preliminary questions, he had maintained the improbability that God should in such a way have communicated His will to men. One assertion, little known in those days, he stopped short of making; in other words, he did not so far limit the Omnipotent One as to deny the possibility of the supernatural, this attainment was reserved for a more modern time. All that he asserted was, that he did not think circumstances had ever arisen to require a Divine revelation, and therefore none had taken place.

[1] See his dedicatory epistle, which he addresses to his deceased sister.

"As we were discussing these all-important questions, the clouds which had hidden the moon's face suddenly dissipated, and the luminary came forth in silvery radiance. The sight was one to send a thrill of pleasure through any frame of ordinary feeling, and my companion, who possessed the extreme nervous sensibility of genius, was evidently affected by the gladsome spectacle. His exclamation, however, was strangely different from the one which I had expected to hear. Next morning he had to undergo a competition for a situation which he desired to fill; and, being anxious about the result, he had oftener than once alluded to the subject during the discussions of the evening. When the cheerful moon so suddenly showed her face, he cried out with enthusiasm, 'I regard the unexpected appearance of the moon at this moment as an omen for good. I believe now that I shall obtain the situation to-morrow,' or words of very similar purport. On which I drew his attention to the inconsistency into which he had heedlessly fallen, in his unguarded utterance. 'You have maintained,' I said in a bantering way, 'that never have circumstances arisen to require a revelation from heaven, and, consequently, you have looked with prejudice and suspicion on all evidence which has been brought forward of the fact. Then a moment after having expressed this view, you have virtually maintained the exact opposite. At last a revelation from heaven has become a necessity; or, at least, things have so changed as to make it expedient that one should be given. Your anxiety regarding the competition of the morrow has been of importance enough to require a message from heaven to allay it. The antecedent improbability that a Divine revelation should be given, which you have been maintaining, has passed away. God has at length sent in-

formation regarding the future, and has selected yourself out of the whole human race as its recipient. To afford you a satisfactory *omen*, He has made the beclouded moon unveil her face; and you, entertaining faith in the Divine message, have consequently dismissed the anxiety in regard to to-morrow.'

"Let it not be supposed that the incident now related is fiction; it actually occurred in the writer's experience. Nor was the inconsiderate position, thoughtlessly taken up by his really gifted opponent, one which no man had ever occupied before. It is well-known to students of the Deistical controversy, that the celebrated Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, lapsed into a similar error. In the remarkable work, 'Leland's View of the Principal Deistical Writers,' London, 1754, vol. I., pp. 469—471, there is reference to a manuscript life of Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, drawn up from memorials penned by himself, and which contains what one who read the manuscript calls 'a surprising incident.'

"After observing that Lord Herbert's Tract, '*De Veritate*,' was his favourite work, he produceth a large extract relating to it in that lord's own words, signifying, that though it had been approved by some very learned men to whom he had shown it, among whom he mentions Grotius, yet, as the frame of his whole book was so different from what had been written heretofore on this subject, and he apprehended he should meet with much opposition, he did consider whether it were not better for him awhile to suppress it. And then his Lordship proceeds thus:—

"'Being thus doubtful in my chamber on one fine day in the summer, my casement being open towards the south, the sun shining clear, and no wind stirring, I took my book, *De Veritate*, in my hands, and kneeling on my knees, de-

voutly said these words :—O thou eternal God, author of the light which now shines upon me, and giver of all inwrapt illuminations, I do beseech Thee, of Thine infinite goodness, to pardon a greater request than a sinner ought to make: I am not satisfied enough whether I should publish this book. If it be for Thy glory, I beseech Thee to give me some sign from heaven; if not, I shall suppress it. I had no sooner spoken these words but a loud, though yet gentle noise, came forth from the heavens (for it was like nothing on earth), which did so cheer and comfort me, that I took my petition as granted, and that I had the sign I demanded; whereupon also I resolved to print my book. This, how strange soever it may seem, I protest before the Eternal God is true; neither am I any way superstitiously deceived herein; since I did not only clearly hear the noise, but in the serenest sky that I ever saw, being without all cloud, did, to my thinking, see the place from whence it came.'

"Who, we in conclusion ask, is really the victim of superstition? The man who believes in no revelation, except one made to himself personally, on evidence which no one else can accept, and on a point of very trifling interest?—or the man who has faith in a revelation which for centuries upon centuries has triumphed over every hostile assault, which has for its theme, not the gaining of a situation, or the publication of a book, but the salvation of the world? Are not superstition and unbelief more akin than they seem?"

To the above we may add, that Lord Herbert's aerial answer to prayer forcibly reminds one of the Scriptural appellation, "Prince of the power of the air"—an agency with which the spiritualists or spirit-rappers of the present

day are also reputed to be familiar. But in whatever aspect Lord Herbert's supposed miraculous answer to prayer may be viewed, his form of petition for a supernatural indication relative to the publication of his infidel production, may be taken as a specimen of the world's form of prayer, under a variety of circumstances, to "the god of this world, the spirit that worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience." His servants and faithful adherents are numerous, and being skilful in artful and wicked devices, and withal endowed at times with supernatural powers,[1] he, no doubt, finds ways and means of answering prayer to the satisfaction of his worshippers!

"In the teaching of Jesus," M. Renan says, "there was neither theology nor creed."[2] This is as far from the truth as light is from darkness. His Church could not in the first instance have been organised and established without having some sort of a creed or theological doctrine for its basis; nor could it have been perpetuated and extended by His Apostles and the Church generally. To enlarge upon the various doctrines of Divine truth as taught by Christ, and accepted by the Christian Church as a basis of theological teaching, would be to depart from the original design of this work. A very brief reference to some of His leading doctrines must therefore suffice.

He taught the doctrine of the Trinity, as we have seen—Matt. xxviii. 19. He taught the doctrine of the personality of the Holy Ghost, by asserting that "the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men[3]—that He should dwell with the people of God, and be in them[4]—that whatsoever He should hear that should He speak[5]—that He should convince the world of sin and of

[1] Rev. xvi. 14. [2] Page 213.
[3] Matt. xii. 31. [4] John xiv. 17. [5] John xvi. 13.

judgment—and that He should take of the things of Christ, show them unto His people, and guide them into all truth."[1]

He sets forth His own Divinity, in that He declares Himself to have power equally with the Father to send the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, unto His people[2]—that He would, as the Omnipresent One, be Himself with them wheresoever two or three were in His name met together—that He was not to be regarded as man simply, because He had a priority of existence to man—that He was not simply the son of David, as the Pharisees put it,[3] because He was David's Lord—that He was not an angel, because the angels were His own, over the highest of whom it was His Sovereign prerogative to exercise supreme authority[4]—that while departed saints were not to be worshipped,[5] and the worship of angels was forbidden,[6] and He had Himself asserted that the Almighty alone was to be worshipped,[7] He, nevertheless, upon several different occasions, permitted and encouraged the worship of Himself as Lord and God—that He declares Himself to be One with the Father, equal in universal proprietorship, and sharing the supreme glory with Him before the world was—that the sacrifice of His "flesh" being stamped with Infinity as the God-man united, was a sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole world—and that, being thus God in the highest sense of the term, it was no robbery for Him to claim that men ought also to honour, or worship the Son, even as they honour, or worship the Father. And then, to crown all, although He had previously asserted the unity of God,[8] He sets forth at once the equality, the distinct personality, and the Trinity of the

[1] John xvi. 8–13. [2] John xv 26. [3] Matt. xxii. 42.
[4] Matt. xiii. 41. [5] Rev. xxii. 9. [6] Col. ii. 18.
[7] Matt. iv. 10. [8] Matt. xix. 17.

Godhead in the one general command, "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Christ taught also the doctrine of a particular Providence: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered.[1] Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you"[2]—also the doctrine of the necessity of an atonement, and of His own death being sacrificial: "My flesh I give for the life of the world. If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins"—of the depravity of man's heart: "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts"—of the necessity of regeneration, or the new birth: "Ye must be born again. Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"—of the necessity of prayer: "Watch and pray. Men ought always to pray, and not to faint"—of the indispensableness of faith: "Have faith in God. O, ye of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? Ye believe in God; believe also in Me. Thy faith hath saved thee: Go and sin no more"—of the necessity of coupling obedience with faith: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them"—of a recognised distinction between the righteous and the wicked: "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Blessed are the pure in heart. Then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father"—of the soul's capability of existing in a state of separation from the body: "This day shalt thou be with

[1] Matt. x. 29. [2] Matt. vi. 32.

Me in Paradise"—of the general judgment: "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee. I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment"—of the resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked: "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation"—of the eternal punishment of the wicked: "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that *never shall be quenched:* Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." Jesus taught also the doctrine of the personality of Satan, but to this we shall devote a separate chapter.

As to Christ's "theology or creed," then, of which Renan says He had none, these with many other passages, speak for themselves; and we may further observe, that in His recognition of the organized branches of His Church, as recorded in the book of Revelation, Jesus reproaches them with having corrupted His system of theology, by having those among them who taught or held certain false doctrines.[1] We would also remark in this connection, for the consideration of that class of unbelievers who are wont to make capital of the divided state of the Christian Church, that they entirely overlook the fact that it is in respect to the non-essentials of religion alone that the orthodox Pro-

[1] Rev. ii. 14, 15.

testant Churches disagree, and that in the evangelical doctrines or essentials of religious faith and practice, there is the most cordial agreement among them. A moment's candid reflection might serve to convince them that the various branches of the Universal Church, are but as so many regiments of a great army whose operations are all tending to the same end. The differences in name, military drill, equipments, etc., of the different departments of the army, as the artillery, cavalry, and infantry, corresponding with the different names, forms of government, discipline, etc., by which the various branches of the Church militant are distinguished, but all having the same object in view, and their somewhat diversified operations, under the superintending providence of God, all tending directly to the same end, namely, the reconciliation of the world to God through a crucified and risen Redeemer.

In perfect consistency with their principles also, sceptics and unbelievers generally, seem to take a peculiar pleasure in dwelling upon the imperfections of professing Christians, as being an employment much more congenial to their tastes and inclinations, than the instituting of a diligent and candid inquiry into the evidences of Christianity. For this they have not time. The subject moreover is dry, and the study distasteful. It might also involve some little expense; and they would therefore beg to be excused, or, at least, would beg to defer so distasteful and unimportant an investigation to a more convenient season! Judging from the tenor of some of his remarks relative to public worship, M. Renan doubtless thinks with others of his creed, that Christians who attend Divine Worship, and observe the Sacraments and ordinances of the Church, are no better than other men —no better than those who wholly neglect the observance

of such things; but the assertion, although frequently made, is really just as reasonable as to say in reference to another matter, that because spies and traitors are known to exist, therefore there are no "true men," and not a whit more so. It is based on the absurd assumption, that because there are hypocrites and mere formalists in the Church—men faithless to their professed principles—Christianity is but a name, and the Church contains none who are really true to their Christian principles and profession; as though it were not an established and self-evident principle, that the presence of the counterfeit in anything but proves the existence of the genuine. Hypocrites there are and will be, for the Bible itself speaks of them; and in some instances so apparently transformed are they for a time, that it is impossible for man to detect the counterfeit. God alone can do this; and although permitted to grow together here, between the wheat and the tares, the true and the false professor, God will, in the proper time, effect a final and everlasting separation.

But with regard to the real Christian being no better or more virtuous than the man of the world, it is a position that will not stand the test of reason and experience; inasmuch as the former estimates true virtue from the highest stand-point of morality, and is invariably virtuous from principle, while those of the latter who are practically moral are so from nature or policy, and to the extent, and so long only, as nature or circumstances, or both combined, prompt them to adopt their accommodating standard of virtue, and lead them to the practice of it. Again, besides the manifest superiority of the virtue of the true Christian in this respect, he possesses a still higher degree of virtue equally practical with the other, and of which the man of the world is at all

times wholly destitute. It consists in supreme love to the highest and best of beings, and the consecration of his entire life and being to His service. This is holiness, or virtue of the highest order—a standard of virtue far removed from the low standard of morality which is possible of attainment to the mere man of the world—man in a state of nature. True Christians, then, I affirm, *are* "better" than those who are not—true believers who have realized the Gospel to be "the power of God" to the salvation of their souls, *are* more virtuous, in every sense of the term, than the unbeliever who is "without God and without hope in the world."

The moral, religious, and heaven-born effects produced in the hearts and lives of those who "neglect not the assembling of themselves together" for public worship, are notorious and incalculable; and this consideration is of itself an evidence of its Divine origin. But besides the individual effects produced by the public preaching of the Gospel, it produces a general moral influence throughout every community in which public worship is observed, the extent of which for good cannot be fully estimated. M. Renan may well say, then, that the religion of the Gospel, the "pure worship" instituted by Christ, "will never be succeeded by another or a better;" in this he has spoken truly, for the immutable One, who has Himself styled it the "everlasting Gospel," herein utters a prediction—whether Renan recognizes it as such or not—the fulfilment of which shall be demonstrated in the experience of mankind to the end of time. And in view of the purifying, comforting, life-giving influence of God's grace and Spirit, realized in the public "assemblies of His saints," as in all ages past of the Church, so in all ages to come,

multitudes will yet accord a heartfelt response to the sentiment of the psalmist, "I was glad when they said, Let us go up to the house of the Lord;" for thereby have we, with the prophet, been enabled to renew our spiritual strength; mount up as upon the wings of an eagle into the regions of pure enjoyment; run the Christian race, and not grow weary; walk the heavenly road, and not faint.

CHAPTER VII.

MIRACLES.

THE possibility of miracle and of a personal Divinity must stand or fall together. The Bible recognizes the existence of both. Divine Revelation is itself a miracle, involving a supernatural manifestation of Divine power. But that God has ever manifested Himself to His intelligent creature, man, by supernatural means, M. Renan will not believe, and hence he rejects certain portions of the Gospel records because, he says, "they are full of miracles." A near relation of his (religiously),[1] ere he departed this life, was of the same mind, and said: "It is impossible that a Being, infinitely wise, should make laws in order to violate them, He would not derange the machine of His own construction, unless it were for its improvement." This passage betrays an utter ignorance on the part of its author of the *moral* motives by which the Almighty, as represented in Scripture, is invariably actuated when performing a work which involves an interference with the laws of nature. God's works are alike perfect whatever He does, and in His plan of operations He is as "infinitely wise" in destroying the work of His hands when the time and the end for which it was created are accomplished, as He was in its original creation. If, for instance, a thing exists as long and under such conditions as God originally purposed it should exist, when the time originally decreed

[1] Voltaire.

for its existence expires, the very immutability of His nature requires that it shall then cease to exist. In like manner, if the wisdom of God decree that the laws of nature which He establishes shall be subject from time to time, during the course of their continuance, to special interpositions of His providence for special purposes—which purposes were also originally in the Divine mind and thus by decree specially provided for—the immutability of His nature requires that when the time and originally foreseen occasion for such special intervention arrive, the laws of nature, which are but instruments of His will and pleasure, must be interfered with. For man to question the wisdom of such a plan of operations, is simply to do violence to his reason, and question the wisdom of God. It is in accordance with the highest dictates of reason, that natural law must ever be subservient to the Author of nature; and that to define the limits of such subserviency, or decry against any manifestations of it that the Divine mind may be pleased to make to His intelligent creatures, is the height of presumption, unreasonableness, and folly.

God's primary object in performing miracles by His servants is not "to violate" natural law, but to manifest to the world that He is the Supreme Ruler and Governor—"that ye may know that I am the Lord, and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth," Ex. ix. 16; x. 2—and also, that He authorizes certain individuals to publish to the world His will as supernaturally revealed to them—such miraculous attestation of their being Divinely commissioned being absolutely indispensable to a rational reception, on the part of mankind, of the truths declared to be revealed. "The works that I do, they testify of Me," said Christ, hereby setting forth the most obvious fact, that

without such works given in attestation of His Divine mission, no one could reasonably receive it as such. His miraculous works were His credentials, proving His mission to be Divine; and without which His teaching, however morally excellent and pure, could not have been regarded otherwise than as the product of a superior, but uninspired, human intellect.

Again: a contravention of the laws of nature to convince the world of the existence, omnipotence, and unity of the One only living and true God, as contradistinguished from the multifarious objects of idolatrous worship, is not to "derange the machine of His own construction;" but, on the contrary, it is simply to make it the means of developing and perfecting His plan of operations in relation to our world—"making His power known," and demonstrating Himself to be the God of nature and creation, and that therefore men were to recognise, bow down to, and worship no other God than the Infinite Being who had thus supernaturally revealed Himself to His creatures.

Of the adaptability of the series of miracles performed by Moses to promote this end, no reasonable person, at all acquainted with the history of Egyptian worship, who reads the account given of them can for a moment question. While they served to most indubitably authenticate the mission of Moses, the miracles were especially calculated to destroy the faith of the Egyptians and Israelites alike in the existence and imagined power of their idol deities. The miracle by which the magician's serpents (supposed to have been collected and artfully introduced) were destroyed, was levelled at the power of their serpent gods—the miracle by which the river Nile was turned into blood, demonstrated the impotency of the god of the river which they worshipped

—the miracle of lice, by which the priests were prevented from approaching their sacred altars, prevented them, while it lasted, from performing acts of worship to any of their deities, who were thus shown to be powerless to help them —and so of all the others, whether directed against their fly-god; many-headed brute or cattle god; Typhon, or evil principle and controller of disease; Serapis, or protector from locusts; Isis and Osiris, at that time representatives of the sun and moon,—they were shown to be alike powerless to avert disease, prevent the destruction of their cattle, the swarming of their land with vermin, or the tempest, horrible gloom, and thick darkness which pervaded their land during three days and three nights. And then, to crown all, after thus, in accordance with the special design of Jehovah, executing "judgment against all the gods of Egypt,"[1] the righteous retribution of God was manifested in the slaying of all the first-born of Egypt, followed by the destruction of Egypt's army and King—a judgment brought upon the nation for cruelly oppressing the Israelites, and killing at the birth all their male children.

Of the adaptability of the benevolent miracles of Christ and His apostles to authenticate their mission, its benign, spiritual, and heavenly character, we need not here say more than that the miracles have each a gracious and spiritual significance, as well as an attestative design.[2]

From the force of idolatrous habit, the influence of interested, idolatrous priestcraft, and other operating causes, the effect produced by the miracles of Moses; on the Egyptian mind, may have been comparatively evanescent; but they certainly had the effect of constraining the Egyptian nation to acknowledge the supremacy of the God of Israel,

[1] Ex. xii. 12.

[2] See "*Christianity and Positivism*," by Dr. McCosh.

and to regard "the man Moses," God's representative, as "very great" and Divinely commissioned; of liberating the Israelites from Egyptian bondage; and, in connection with the miracles of Christ, of bringing over to the religion of the God of Israel, all the most advanced of the civilised and cultivated nations of the earth.

But "Miracles," say the abettors of the various schools of Infidelity, "are contrary to present experience, and therefore we will not believe in them." This were all the same as to say, that because the existence of many species of the animal creation now extinct, but traces of which geologists have professed to discover in the stratified rock and elsewhere, is contrary to our experience, we will not believe it. That they existed in the past we will not believe, because they do not now exist. Now all, I presume, will acknowledge such reasoning to be absurd. And should it be said that on the testimony of competent, reliable, and even living men, distinct traces of such extinct species have been discovered, we might still reply that even such traces are contrary to our experience; thousands of us have never seen them, and therefore, we might say, we will not believe that they exist merely on the recorded testimony of those who say that they have made such discoveries. To argue thus were equally absurd. The rational foundation for our faith in such matters would be the obvious fact, that these men being competent, and having no conceivable motive for deceiving us, we are therefore perfectly justified in accepting and believing their testimony on the subject. The same may be said in reference to the committing of righteous and holy men as martyrs to the flames. We have never seen a martyr burn, nor is it easy to conceive it possible for professed followers of Him who "came not to destroy

men's lives, but to save them," to be so terribly deluded as to think they did God service by acting in such direct and manifest opposition to the spirit and teaching of our Divine Exemplar. Yet such is the fact. Although contrary to present experience, we believe it to have been the experience of the past; and rationally enough, too, since we have the testimony of reliable history in its favour. This rational principle conceded, then, is all that we require in order to establish the authenticity of miracles. Their authenticity is established on the authority of reliable history—the authenticity of the sacred record itself being abundantly confirmed by history both ecclesiastical and secular. And that the sacred historians could have had no possible motive for deceiving mankind must be obvious to every candid mind, from the consideration, that after a life of constant self-sacrifice, honestly and artlessly recording their own faults and failings, as well as their virtues and sufferings in the service of their Redeemer, they, to crown all, voluntarily sealed their testimony with their blood.

M. Renan, however, although presuming to be the author of the life of Him whose character was perfect, who professed to have wrought a series of stupendous *miracles* in His own name, and to have given His disciples power to do the same—strange to say, is a bitter, a most unrelenting, and uncompromising enemy to everything bearing the name, come from whatever source, and attended by whatever evidences of authenticity it may. He thinks it the duty of the historian to aim at separating all that he conceives to be fabulous from what he believes to be true history; and that "There is one class of narratives especially, to which this principle must necessarily be applied. Such are the narratives of supernatural events." And in

justification of that which at every step involves the infinitely momentous, he makes a further sweeping condemnation of the supernatural by laying down the following puerile principle:—"Until a new order of things prevail, we shall maintain this principle of historical criticism—that a supernatural account cannot be admitted as such, that it always implies credulity or imposture, and that it is the duty of the historian to seek to explain it." On the same page (29) he gives the reader a specimen or two of his ability to sophisticate in an attempt to palm upon the world his absurd notions upon the subject, under cover of false and subtle reasoning:—"To assert," he says, "that an event cannot take place *in an impossible manner*, is not to impose an *à priori* philosophy upon history." No; but to assert that it is impossible for the event to have taken place in the manner described, is to impose such "*à priori* philosophy upon history;" and this is what M. Renan has been pleased to invariably do, and this, too, upon a mere whim of his own which he has contrived to shape into what he calls a principle of "historical criticism," but for which he has not a particle of solid ground in the form of argument to sustain him. And as to his seeking to explain "the miracles ascribed to our Lord, which this specious principle" sets forth as his "duty," before we have done with this subject we shall have occasion to refer to one or two attempts of the kind that he has made, and which will afford the reader a good illustration of Monsieur Renan's admirable skill in practically applying his favourite principle.

On page 29, M. Renan further remarks, that "to seek to explain the supernatural, or to reduce it to legend, is not to mutilate facts in the name of theory; it is to make the observation of facts our groundwork." To which we reply,

this is but another example of his subtle and fallacious reasoning. "To seek to explain the supernatural," *is not* "to make the observation of facts our groundwork;" but it is to make the assumption that the supernatural is not real, and that miracles are not facts, "our groundwork."

On page 195 he says:—"The four narrators of the life of Jesus are unanimous in extolling His miracles. We will admit, then, without hesitation, that acts which would now be considered as acts of illusion or folly, held a large place in the life of Jesus." Acts of "illusion and folly"— many, we would observe—may have been associated with the "life of" M. Renan, but with that of Christ such an association is impossible. That Jesus not only wrought what were believed to be miracles, but that He gave the people to understand that they were miracles, by addressing them in such language as, "Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles," &c., is undeniable; so that, with all his pretended admiration of Jesus, if He wrought no miracles He must have been an impostor, deceiving the people, which, however, considering the nature of the miracles He wrought, was utterly impossible. But "observation," Renan further remarks, "teaches us that miracles never happen but in times and countries in which they are believed, and before persons disposed to believe them." This assertion proves neither more nor less than that real miracles are of such a character that they cannot but be believed when and where they are performed. If God works a miracle, it is to accomplish a rational purpose; and in order to this, it must be believed in; and before He performs it, as He performs nothing in vain, He knows that it will be believed in, if not by all, at least by some—certainly by a sufficient number to accomplish the end contemplated by the Divine mind: and

whether it be to confirm the mission of a Moses or the Messiah, when this is accomplished the miracles cease; and then, like other duly-witnessed events, they are left upon record for the rational credence and universal benefit of mankind. If the miracles were not always performed in the presence of scientific witnesses such as M. Renan, they were always wrought in the presence of men who, from the nature of the miracles performed, were quite as well able to "test their miraculous character." The observation of even the most simple and illiterate among them could not possibly have been falsified, since the wisdom and power of God invariably wrought such "wonderful works" before their eyes as were quite within their comprehension.

"A mere sorcerer, after the manner of Simon the magician," Renan observes, "could not have brought about a moral revolution like that effected by Jesus."[1] True; but is there not a palpable connection between this successful and universal moral revolution and the miracles which Christ performed confirmatory of His Divine mission? Allowing Him to have been Divinely commissioned, for instance, would it have been otherwise than it was in reference to these miracles? May we not reasonably suppose that Christ and His apostles would have been thus endowed with miraculous power to establish their authority at the time of announcing such commission? We certainly may. A contrary supposition would be the extreme of unreasonableness. Historical testimony, then, fully accords with the dictates of reason and common sense in relation to this matter.

Renan continues: "Certainly if the Gospel was confined to some chapters of Matthew and Luke, it would be more perfect, and would not now be open to so many objections;

[1] Page 195.

but would Jesus have converted the world without miracles? If He had died at the period of His career we have now reached, there would not have been in His life a single page to wound us; but greater in the eyes of God, He would have remained unknown to men; He would have been lost in the crowd of great unknown spirits, Himself the greatest of all. The truth would not have been promulgated, and the world would not have profited from the great moral superiority with which His Father had endowed Him."[1] In order, then, for His "great moral superiority" to become effective for the good of the world, He needed to take lessons in the school of imposture; and as such an endowment as a pretended miracle-worker was absolutely essential to His success, He determined for the world's sake to become initiated in the secret and deceitful arts of the juggling thaumaturgus, and at the expense, too, of lessening Himself "in the eyes of God!" Wonder that "His Father" lacked the ability to fully qualify Him for the profitable employment of "the great moral superiority with which He had endowed Him"—strange that He could not fully qualify Him for the work that He sent Him into the world to do, without subjecting Him to the painful necessity of choosing between the acceptance of a further endowment from Satan's school, and thereby incur His Father's displeasure, or altogether fail of benefitting the world, and in consequence be doomed to be "lost in the crowd of great unknown spirits, Himself the greatest of all." Silly man! he either gives God the character of "reaping where He had not sown," or gives the large heart of Christ the credit of accomplishing a work for mankind that the Divine benevolence did not comprehend, and this, too, at the very serious cost to Himself of having to pay for His overwrought zeal,

[1] Page 91.

although it led to such glorious results, by a measurable loss of the Divine favour!—results to the world glorious and divine (Renan himself being judge), accomplished solely through the superior wisdom and benevolence of Jesus to the Divine Father, since he says such results were wholly unattainable, were impossible, except in connection with the practice of imposture—the pretended performance of miracle.

The following is rather a startling declaration, coming as it does from the pen of a reputed philosopher: "Nothing great," says Renan, "has been established which does not rest on a legend." Worthy of a master mind such a sentiment, is it not? Well qualified to be an impartial and a truthful biographer and Biblical critic! In keeping with this is another from the same page (187): "When we have effected by our scruples what they accomplished by their falsehoods, we shall have the right to be severe upon them." Justifying, and thereby, by implication, identifying himself with those who are guilty of "falsehoods," Renan, we may presume, does not mean to include *himself* under the term "*our* scruples."

After referring to the unanimity of the Evangelists in extolling the miracles of Christ, he adds: "One of them, Mark, insisted so much on this point, that if we trace the character of Jesus only according to this Gospel, we should represent Him as an exorcist in possession of charms of rare efficacy, as a very potent sorcerer."[1] And on page 187, by way of justifying himself in the imputation, or of Jesus in the assumption of this character, he says: "He who takes humanity with its illusions, and seeks to act with it and upon it cannot be blamed. *The only culprit* in such cases is the humanity which is willing to be deceived."—A

[1] Page 192.

moral principle this, it will doubtless be admitted, worthy of a graduate in the school of infamy. *The deceiver is blameless; the deceived alone to be blamed!*

Quoting Acts viii. 18, Renan says: "Some even thought to buy from the Disciples of Jesus the secret of the miraculous power which had been conferred upon them." The "secret of the juggler or sorcerer's art into which they had been initiated," M. Renan should have said. But no, he probably thinks "miraculous power" the more appropriate expression of the two in this case, as it was evidently something above sorcery that Simon, who was himself a sorcerer, expressed a desire to possess. It was the miraculous power that he wonderingly beheld in Philip, and Peter, and John, that he desired to be endowed with—verses 13, 18—the power before which the sorcery of an Elymas, who was struck blind at the word of Paul, becomes powerless, and is as nothing. But did the "some" who "even sought to buy the secret from the disciples of Jesus" get what they wanted? Was money a temptation to these poor disciples? but they were rich—rich in faith and good works—rich in the possession of the faith, the power, and the love of God, with a still richer reward in prospect, even an exceeding and an eternal weight of glory. But had they the power to teach their "art," or impart their secret, for money? Was not the apostle's reply to Simon Magus that miraculous gifts could not be purchased, charging him with being in the bonds of iniquity for conceiving so iniquitous a thought as that the gift of God could be purchased with money?

Referring to the apostles handling serpents, etc., with impunity, Renan says: "The further we get from Jesus the more offensive does this theurgy become." But we have

not yet gone from Jesus, he should have remembered, for He it was that said they should even handle serpents with impunity—that they should in fact, be immortal till their work, assigned them by God, was done—and recorded facts, which are stubborn things, prove that they could, for Paul actually did. See Acts xxviii. 3. M. Renan's great extravagance and frequent falsity of assertion are remarkable. As an illustration, referring the reader to Matthew xii. 24, as an authority for the assertion, he says: "Carrying the logic of absurdity to the extreme, certain men cast out demons by Beelzebub, the Prince of demons."[1] Now Matthew xii. 24, with the two verses preceding, read thus: "Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb; and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." The reader will see that there is not one word in this passage corroborative of the assertion, that "some men cast out devils by Beelzebub." How blind and deluded, then, must that man be who thus wilfully falsifies and perverts the teaching of Scripture; and how exceedingly weak must that cause be which requires to be supported in so unprincipled a manner. By the retributive judgment of the Almighty, "seeing," such men "shall see, but shall not perceive; and hearing, they shall hear, but shall not understand." Matt. xiii. 14.

"Facts," says Renan, "ought to explain themselves by proportionate causes." So they do in relation to the matter in hand. God is demonstrated to be the Cause, and His power is proportionate to the effects produced. "Miracles,"

[1] Page 212.

he continues, "are ordinarily more the work of the public than of him to whom they are attributed."[1] Pretended "miracles," I suppose he means; but it is well that he uses the term "ordinarily," for he hereby makes the admission that there are exceptions; and it will not be denied that no one has a claim to these exceptions equal to Christ, and to His Apostles, who in His name wrought "many wonderful works" bearing the indubitable stamp of genuine miracles. "The greatest miracle," Renan further remarks, "would have been His refusal to perform any." Not if He were not capable of performing a real miracle, and still be the sublime moral character that M. Renan has elsewhere represented Him to be. Possessing such a character, it would be a miracle, an impossibility rather, for Him to be capable of consenting to make even the first attempt at jugglery and imposition in the name of the Almighty by whose power within Him He professed to work. Nor would it do, really possessing the power as He did, for Him to go too far with His miracles, because He would not then have been crucified, and His mission would thereby have been unfulfilled. He might, if He would, have overwhelmed with astonishment and wondering awe all the doctors and nobles in Judea, Palestine, or the Roman empire, by a thousand displays of His omnipotent power in their presence; aye, He might have constrained every one of them to fall prostrate at His feet, and pay Him the universal homage that was His due, but this would not have been to suffer and die for the sins of the world. By thus convincing and disarming all the nobles and rulers of the land, He would have failed in accomplishing the grand object of His mission, justice and mercy would have remained unreconciled, and man would have been a lost

[1] Page 196.

sinner still. But this could not be. Love brought Him to our world that He might shed His precious blood for the remission of our sins; and die for our sins, and give His life a ransom for the world He must, for the Spirit of love and mercy had predicted it of Him in the ages preceding, and He also taught His disciples and said unto them, "The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day."[1]

This may account also for His not wishing to have His miracles noised abroad at particular periods of His public life. This, however, appears to have been only in particular instances, for which He doubtless had special reasons; as a number of passages from the Gospels go to show that His fame, both as a teacher and a worker of miracles, was very great and widely extended; as, for example, Matt iv. 23–25 —"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And His fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and He healed them. And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan." Particular reasons for prohibiting the noising abroad of individual cases of healing in those who appeared to be exceedingly eager to do so, He doubtless had; as He had, *e.g.*, in refusing to perform a miracle simply to gratify the inquisitiveness and heartless curiosity of the Tetrarch of Tiberius, which M. Renan

[1] Mark ix. 31.

quotes and refers to in a manner that certainly adds nothing to his reputation except as a wicked detractor and calumniator of our Lord. After giving a most justifiable reason for Christ's refusal to perform a miracle on the occasion referred to, Renan artfully connects with it another reason, giving to Jesus the character of a deceitful impostor: "Jesus took care," he says, "not to prejudice His position by mingling with an irreligious world, *which wished to draw from Him an idle amusement;*" and then He adds: "He aspired only to gain the people; *He reserved for the simple, means suitable to them alone.*[1] Taking this view of Christ's miracles, or rather "clever tricks," as he supposes the Tetrarch took them to be, and which, he says, "were a violence done Him by His age, a concession forced from Him by a passing necessity,"—it is not surprising to find him, as on page 196, drawing consolation from the thought that while "the religious reformer will live eternally, the exorcist and the thaumaturgus [the juggling deceiver from sad necessity !] have alike passed away."

The character of our Lord's miracles is so fully in consonance with the divine, the benevolent, and spiritual character of His teaching, and so entirely diverse are they in their essential character as professedly proceeding from an all-wise, merciful, and benevolent Deity, from the character of the legendary miracles ascribed to various historical personages, that the wonder is that men of learning and ingenuity cannot discern the striking dissimilarity, the entire absence of all true analogy between them. A Renan may institute a comparison, as he has done, between the miracles of our Lord and those ascribed to "Simon the magician," such as "flying through the air, transforming himself into a goat, putting on two faces, rolling himself unhurt among

[1] Page 227.

burning coals, making statues to talk, and dogs of brass or stone to bark,"—but in doing so, common-sense people, I imagine, will think that his powers of discrimination and of instituting comparisons, to say the least, cannot be of the very highest order.[1] Such legendary miracles proceeding from the wonder-loving spirit of the times, of which Renan speaks, may serve to show the character of the miracles which would have been ascribed to Jesus had His character of thaumaturgus, like that of Simon the magician, been but an imposition, or had His miracles been "more the work of the people than of Himself," as Renan says they were; but beyond this no legitimate use can be made of them. They are thus, by a fair and legitimate deduction arising from the character of those legendary wonders which were ascribed to the magicians of the time, plainly calculated to demonstrate the genuineness, the reality, and the supernatural character of the miracles of our Lord.

[1] Dr. Carpenter has evinced the same surprising lack of discrimination in a paper which recently appeared in the *Contemporary Review*.

CHAPTER VIII.

MIRACLES.

A MIRACLE, in the Scripture sense, is an event or effect produced by the direct agency of almighty power, contrary to the established constitution and ordinary course of things — a palpable deviation from the known laws of nature, for the accomplishment of some specific purpose. In effecting the establishment of a religion professing to have come from God, such miraculous interposition is manifestly indispensable. And to such, therefore, the institution of the *Law* and the *Gospel* appealed for confirmation, and by such has God been pleased to ratify and establish the Divine origin of the revelations made to the world through His inspired servants at the commencement of each dispensation. Miracles were thus to be regarded as a seal of their Divine commission to make known the will of God to men, and as such they were appealed to by our Lord Himself: "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." These works were necessarily of a nature contrary to ordinary experience, or there would have been no use in appealing to them as attestative of His Divine commission. Contrary to ordinary experience they must be, and contrary to such experience they were. Christ did not, in appealing to them as a witness of His Divine commission, enter upon any laboured argument

or specious train of reasoning with a view to convincing His auditory that they were really miracles, because they needed nothing of the sort. In the self-consciousness of His own spotless integrity, and of the Divinely-confirmatory character of His miracles, He simply appealed to them as plain and indubitable facts. And so also did the Apostles, when speaking of the miracles they performed in Jesus' name.

Obvious and Divinely sustained as it was, however, M. Renan is pleased to call into question their supernatural endowment, and remarks, with his usual sagacity: "For nearly a century the Apostles and their disciples dreamed only of miracles."[1] A long "dream" indeed, we would remark. Wonder they didn't wake up, ere that time had elapsed, to a consciousness of the fact that it was only a "dream!" "We do not say," he further observes, "that miracles are impossible." No; for if he did he would be an Atheist, because to deny the possibility of a miracle is, in effect, to deny the existence of God.

As the subject of Atheism has been incidentally introduced, and the writer has proved from personal intercourse that this class of moral phenomena is not yet wholly extinct, since the special design of this work is general usefulness, the reader will, doubtless, not take it amiss if I indulge myself in a few observations on the subject in this connection—not exactly as to the mental character of the Atheist, for in this King David has, happily, anticipated me (see the first clause of Psalm xiv.), but rather as to the folly of those who, denying or questioning the existence of the Almighty as an intelligent, living, personal Being, exalt inanimate nature and clothe it with the attributes which can belong alone to intelligent Deity. To those of my readers, especially the young, who may be thrown into the company of

[1] Page 191.

such as are of Atheistic principles, and who may be in danger of being contaminated by them, I would say, that while the eternal existence of the Supreme Being, as the infinite, uncreated Source of all else that exists, is a revealed fact that must ever remain an incomprehensible mystery to finite beings—on the Atheistic hypothesis that there is no such eternal, uncreated, intelligent First Cause, the *mystery* of existence is not removed, nor in the least degree lessened; for, on the supposition that there is no God, the mystery of finite existence, animate and inanimate, intelligent and unintelligent, is but transferred from a supreme intelligent Cause to blind forces existing in connection with what we call "nature," which leaves the question, Whence originated this "nature?" still unanswered and unanswerable. Instead of removing the mystery, it really increases it by making it twofold—first, the inexplicable mystery as to the origin of nature, and next the mystery as to how this thing called "nature," to which intelligence, wisdom, and power, in their individual distinctiveness, are not attachable as attributes, could have originated thinking, intelligent beings. The diversity of being, the continued existence and harmonious working of natural law throughout the universe, are quite explicable on the admission that there is an infinite Being upholding, sustaining, and regulating the laws of natural existence, which His omniscience and omnipotence had primarily originated; but discard the idea of an intelligent Creator and Preserver, and the diversified phenomena, the changeless beauty, and continued order of nature become at once an inexplicable riddle—a mystery that is second only to its primary origin; thus giving rise to a mystery in duplicate, one of which is quite equal to the mystery of the Divine existence, and the other scarcely

second to it in its mysterious, unintelligently, yet orderly and systematically-controlled operations and developments. But the language of reason no less than of revelation, in reference to the origin, continued preservation, and order of nature, is, "Thou, even Thou art Lord alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and Thou preservest them all."[1]

Natural law, although operating throughout the universe, is in itself but an inanimate, involuntary thing. It cannot comprehend itself, nor any of the results of its action. It acts by a perpetual constraint; nor can it of itself ever vary its action or cease to act. Such is natural law, to which, in connection with inanimate matter, as the ultimatum or final cause, the Atheist would trace all animate and intelligent existence; which is simply to make a lifeless, involuntary, unintelligent thing originate a something incomparably superior to itself—a living, intelligent being, capable of thought, feeling, indefinite knowledge, and voluntary action!

The palpable manifestations of design in the mechanism of the universe, and the beautiful and exact adaptation of one part to the other exemplified in the mechanism and arrangement of all the varied works of nature, together with the unvarying order and harmonious working of the laws which operate throughout the entire system of universal nature, necessarily bespeak for it an intelligent and Divine Original. It is a principle, which to a rational being can never be other than axiomatic, that every effect in nature must necessarily be traced to an adequate cause; and that Cause, in relation to the combined and complicated effects of nature—evincing as they do indubitable marks of the most perfect contrivance and design—must necessarily be intelligent.

[1] Neh. ix. 6.

Whatever may be the theory adopted as to the diversified evolutions of nature's forces, so exactly are means and ends made to correspond, and so marvellously well connected is the entire system of nature—so unmistakable are the indications, everywhere apparent, of intelligent design, that to every mind not totally blinded by prejudice and the influence of sin, they must afford demonstrative evidence of an intelligent, omniscient, and almighty Creator—all subsequent evolutions and developments of nature being but the necessary result of an intelligently constituted order of things, traceable primarily to the great Originator, God.

As in the case of the various classes of artisans who have been represented as saying, "There is nothing like ——," the thing peculiar to their craft, whatever it may be; so with the scientist, there appears to be nothing like—Science. A clipping then from his own domain. Man exists. *Geology* proves that there was a time when he did not exist.[1] He must, therefore, have had an origin; and the evidences of contrivance in the mechanism of his bodily frame, as well as in the constitution of its associate, the mind, prove that his being must have originated with a pre-existent intelligent Cause. And so it may be predicated of all the other works of creation. This pre-existent intelligent Being, Source and universal Cause of all, is God—the only God, and before Whom therefore all men should most reverently bow. As saith the prophet, He is "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity"—and the Psalmist: "Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." "Let all the earth," then, "fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For by the Word of the Lord were

[1] Nor can it be made to appear from Geological research and discovery that man has a higher antiquity than 6000 years. See "The Truth of the Bible," by the Rev. B. W. Savile, M.A., Curate of Combe, Diocese of Exeter.

the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. For He spake and it was done."—Psalm xxxiii. "In Him," also, the Apostle says, "we live, move, and have our being. For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." Rom. xi. 36.

Mankind, whether from intuition or otherwise, have always possessed a sufficiency of light to form some idea of a personal God; and hence all nations, whether Christian or Heathen, have recognised and believed in the existence of a Supreme Being. To this it has been objected, says a writer in the American Encyclopædia, "that there have been, at different times and places, men who were Atheists and deniers of God. But these have been so few, and by their opinions have shown that they rather denied the particular Providence than the existence of God, that it can hardly be said to be an exception to the argument stated. And even if men were bold enough to assert it, it would not be an absolute proof that they really believed what they said, since it might proceed from a wish that there were no God to whom they must be accountable for their sin, rather than a belief of it. Psalm xiv. 1. It has also been objected, that whole nations have been found in Africa and America, that have no notion of a Deity; but this is what has never been proved; on the contrary, upon accurate inspection, even the most stupid Hottentots, Saldanians, Greenlanders, Kamtschatkans, and savage Americans, are found to have some idea of a God."

Speaking in reference to this universal knowledge or perception of the Divine Existence, the Apostle Paul says, it is "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them."[1] And Elihu, of

[1] Rom. i. 19.

the book of Job says, "There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding."[1] Both reason and the inspired Word, however, assure us that even in His Word and His works combined we cannot "by searching find out the Almighty unto perfection."[2] Of Himself He says, "*I am, that I am.*"[3] And the Apostle who tells us that the Atheist—both speculative and practical—is "without excuse; for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead"[4]—the Apostle who tells us this, as we have seen, limits our knowledge of the Almighty in the use of such language as, "That which may be known of God," etc. Among many other things which may be certainly known of Him "who only hath immortality" in Himself, and whom the Apostle says, "declare I unto you," in contradistinction from the *unknown* god whom the Athenians "ignorantly worshipped," he tells us that He is the Being in whom *His creatures have life;*[5] and He is the Great Supreme, the Father of all, Christ adds, who "*hath life in Himself.*"[6]

Just as an appearance of any kind invariably implies a thing causing the appearance; just as a thing seen implies sight; a thing heard, hearing; a thing felt, feeling; a thing known, the mind's capability of knowing; an act of adoration and worship, the soul's capability of adoring and worshipping; so every effect produced of which we are cognisant, and, by a parity of reasoning, every effect in the universe implies and must necessarily have a producing cause; and the combined real effects produced throughout universal nature with their secondary causes, by the same process of rational induction, implies a first or final Cause

[1] Job. xxxii. 8. [2] Job. xi. 17. [3] Ex. iii. 14.
[4] Rom. i. 20. [5] Acts xvii. 25. John v. 26.

of all such secondary causes and effects. Universal creation is an effect which, according to our established laws of ratiocination, confirmed by all science and universal experience, must have a cause—from the invariable relation known to exist between cause and effect, creation and creation's laws must necessary be traceable to a Supreme Creator and Lawgiver. "His eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen by the things which are made." This is true philosophy as well as theology—the visible effects lead the mind direct to the contemplation of their great Cause, who may be thus, through His works, certainly known, and measurably comprehended.

Allow me to vary the expression of this argument. The existence of the Deity is apparent, not only from the existence of the material creation as a whole, but from the intelligent design which is seen in the nice adjustment of all the laws of nature, so as to prevent, for instance, a disastrous clashing of the spheres, and also in the adaptation and harmonious co-operation of separate and distinct physical causes to produce a given end; as, for example, in the construction of the human frame there is a diversity of physical causes at work producing separate physical effects, all which are made to harmoniously combine in producing the end designed—a perfect physical frame. That cause and effect in relation to all with which we are acquainted in the natural world, are inseparable, the observation and experience of not only the learned world but of all ages of the world, demonstrate. And from the inseparableness of these secondary or natural causes from their effects, the mind is inevitably led to the conclusion that there must have been a cause of nature itself—one leading, all-controlling cause, giving rise to and keeping in operation all

the secondary ones. This much we can comprehend. We see that cause and effect are inseparable in nature; we see that nature itself has been contrived and produced, and that therefore it must have had a Contriver and Producer. But with the existence of this great contriving and producing Power the sphere of our vision terminates. We cannot go beyond the *fact* of his existence; the mystery of it is impenetrable. The question as to the *origin* of the originating Power of this system of manifest contrivance, is wholly beyond the domain of our reason; and therefore we are, and must expect to be, utterly lost in an abyss of bewilderment of unfathomable depth, if we attempt to reason upon it.

But some men, as we have seen—men of extraordinary intellectual compass, no doubt—have attempted to form for themselves a god out of nature; and although they have not yet quite discovered the clue to it, they appear to think the construction of worlds a very simple process. Even a happy chance may be a sufficient cause to start a world into existence, and send it spinning upon its axis! They, of course, leave it for less profound thinkers to discover that *chance*, which is but the absence of order and system, could not originate and sustain a universe whose distinguishing characteristic is system and order. A substance scientifically called "star dust," it appears, is the basis on which this marvellous thing called *chance* is supposed to act, when contemplating the construction of a world—we do not say *a system* of worlds, for chance action and systematic action would appear to the inhabitants of our mundane sphere (except, we might say, to a very distinguished few) as diametrically opposite. Such philosophers as Mr. J. Stuart Mill, who "ventures to think that a religion without a God,

may be, even to Christians, an instructive and profitable object of contemplation!"[1] and who ventures to suggest that "there may be worlds in which there may be effects without a cause!" Such philosophers will, of course, experience no difficulty here. But these, you know, are the exception: the most of us cannot attain unto them. This *chance* origin of our world, the starry heavens, and the entire system of nature, may be readily comprehended by these chance gentlemen of the star dust order; but all who cannot claim kin with this high order of exceptional intelligences, must remain content with such views of the system and origin of nature, as are within the compass of man's abilities as a rule.

The representatives of the Atheistic school referred to, disliking the idea of an Infinite Being holding them accountable for their moral actions, assert that all the forces of nature and all modes of existence were originally contained in an undeveloped state in this substance called "star dust." Rational ground for such an assumption, however, there is not the slightest. But suppose this position were conceded them, to an unbiassed, reflecting mind, yielding to the dictates of reason, the question would at once naturally arise, If all things, even life itself, with all the phenomena of intelligent and mental existence, were produced from star dust as an elementary substance originally containing them all in an undeveloped state—when did the phenomena of development and diversified production commence? And further, by whom or by what power was the developing process set in motion? The phenomena of nature, say they, were produced from this "dust," under "certain conditions;" that is to say, certain fortuitous con-

[1] See his "Compt. and Positivism."

ditions as diversified as are the diversities discoverable in creation—creation being but a name for the star dust development of nature. But suppose it were possible for this star dust, in its original elementary state, to contain the elements of all possible existence, it is clear that among the "conditions" essential to the production of any one form or species of existence, one absolutely indispensable condition in order to its production, must be the presence of an intelligent, reasoning, and contriving Power, by which the union and separate action of certain latent properties contained in the original "dust" is effected in any given case of after natural production. Essential to the production of even the simplest forms of organic or inorganic material existence, its necessity becomes but the more apparent in order to the production of the higher orders of physical and of mental existence. The presence, in particular, of the elements of mind, thought, and intelligence, in this elementary star dust, however is alike inconceivable and absurd.

"Every house is builded by some man; but He that built all things is God."[1] "The worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."[2] Whether originally made out of "star dust," or not, it was "by the Word of the Lord that the heavens were made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth,"[3]—the "word" doubtless adding such properties to the "dust," or making such creative additions to it (if such were the ground-work of creation) as were required for the varied purposes of creation; just as it was "by the word of the Lord" that life and vitality were given to the decomposing body of Lazarus when he was raised from the dead. There was nothing gradual in this scriptural representation of an instantaneous creation of life, health, and

[1] Heb. iii. 4. [2] Heb. xi. 3. [3] Ps. xxxiii. 6.

vigor, from this dead body of putrid, decomposing matter—there was no evolutionary process here, nothing akin to the gradual development from star dust, of a physical and intellectual being by the operation of natural law. To suppose that the elements of an intellectual and moral nature were contained in, and by a natural process evolved, from star dust, or any other dust, to say the least, is not a very rational supposition. The "dust" of whatever name, if used at all, was simply the clay in the hands of the great Potter out of which He made the worlds; and out of which in the exercise of His creative power, He may be creating other worlds at the present time for anything we know, or reason can determine to the contrary.

A gentleman with whom I had some conversation while travelling upon one of the American lakes, said to me: "How do you know that there is a God?" In reply, I pointed to the heavens and bade him contemplate the works of creation, supposing that Paul's argument in reference to a manifest contrivance proving the existence of a contriver, would have been quite satisfactory. Paul, as already noticed, states his argument briefly thus: "Every house is builded by some man; but He that built all things is God." But it is in vain that we remind such men that "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handy work;" it is in vain that we direct them to the contemplation of "the heavens above and the earth beneath," since the process of manufacturing worlds and the things upon them is, in their estimation, so simple—originating, as they say, simply from a particular adjustment (chemical, no doubt) of certain properties contained in a sort of primordial uncreated "dust," which has never been seen, but which, there can be no doubt, is floating somewhere among the stars!

A curious thing is this "star dust," containing, as they say it does, the elementary principles of mind and matter, fire and water, and all the other opposites in the universe! These philosophers thought at one time that, through the aid of the telescope, they had discovered some of it floating through space; but unhappily, further examination proved it to be distant stars instead of star dust![1] But although the base on which they have built their atheistic system has thus quietly slipped from under it, nothing daunted, they will doubtless look for it again, and perhaps persevere in the search until they have found it. And then the next thing will be to strive to get hold of some of it, analyze it, and discover the secret of setting the developing process going. And having made the discovery, they will, of course, proceed to set another world, or worlds, afloat, since the developing process once started, as the "dust" contains all the elements of universal nature—matter, mind, and life, animal and vegetable, physical and intellectual, not to say spiritual—there is no knowing where it will end. Perhaps the developing process and successive evolutions thus happily set in motion, may ultimately result in the creation of another beautiful system of worlds, teeming with happy life!

But should these philosophic geniuses, from lack of the necessary intellect, fail to discover the true key to the mystery of Atheistic creation, they will have but to wait for further evolutions and developments of human intellect. And should the time never come when through this evolutionary process, an intellect shall arise from among them sufficiently mighty to make the discovery, they will at least, in process of time, be led to this conclusion, that reasoning *intellect* must necessarily underlie the developing process

[1] See "Christianity and Positivism," by Dr. McCosh—Page 16.

which, according to this theory, begins by an exciting to action the latent powers concealed within the star dust—*intellect*, intellect necessarily, and if human intellect shall finally be acknowledged to be inadequate to it, we shall have to look for a higher; if not to be found on earth, then somewhere else; and if not among the intellects of larger and higher spheres, then higher still we must look, even to the Great Supreme Himself, for with intellect it is manifestly indisputable that Creation with its systematic and orderly developments must necessarily be associated.

Says the Editor of the "Canada Christian Guardian," of September, 1872, in referring to this subject:—"There is an undeniable tendency among a certain class of scientific men to exclude from their speculations all recognition of a personal God. This may not amount to an absolute denial of the existence of God. But the laws and forces of the material world are constantly spoken of as if they were self-sustaining, and required the recognition of no higher power than these forces themselves. All Divine interposition is ignored. The certainty and sufficiency of the conclusions of science are unduly magnified. It is constantly declared that a belief in the Christian Scriptures, or in the interference of a personal God with the operations of natural forces, are obsolete ideas rejected by all intelligent thinkers. Of course it is easy to prove this by denying that any are intelligent or thoughtful who reject their teaching. And yet occasionally some fact comes out prominently that directly contradicts these assumptions.

"The address of Dr. Carpenter, President of the British Association of Science at the recent meeting in England, is valuable as an evidence that all able and profound Scientists are not Atheistic, but especially is it valuable as a rebuke to

those Scientists who so hastily accept every speculation that appears unfavorable to the truth of the Christian religion. It was expected that Dr. Carpenter's address would be on the deep sea soundings with which his name is intimately associated. But he felt that the general subject of the claims and assumptions of the special disciples of science had more urgent claims.

"As a physiologist, Dr. Carpenter has no peer in England or America, and from the point of view of his own chosen fields he tells us that science, so called, is claiming altogether too much; that the leaving out of the Personal Cause in Creation is a departure from the great precedents of Kepler, Newton, Galileo, and Copernicus; that science is not a matter of mere assumption and theory, but of knowledge and certainty. He says 'But when [natural] science, passing beyond its own limits, assumes to take the place of theology, and sets up its own conception of the order of nature as a sufficient account of its cause, it is invading a province of thought in which it has no claim, and not unreasonably provokes the hostility of those who ought to be its best friends. For while the deep-seated instincts of humanity and the profoundest researches of philosophy alike point to mind as the one and only source of power, it is the prerogative of science to demonstrate the unity of the power which is operating through the limitless extent and variety of the universe, and to trace its continuity through the vast series of ages that have been occupied in its evolution.'

"The position of Dr. Carpenter as President of the British Association, and his eminence as a scientific man, clothe these utterances with an authority in the scientific world which the statement of theologians could not exert, though their discussions have long since clearly established the same

conclusions. It is a cause of joy that the party of scientific atheism has been exposed by so keen a metaphysical analysis, and has met with so decided a rebuke."

Said a sceptic to me in the course of a conversation that I had with him as to the existence of God, and the truth of the Bible,—"I don't believe in anything; we are sure of nothing." This gentleman had made a sensible advance, scientifically, on all whom we had previously the honor of conversing with on the subject. He did not profess to be a philosopher exactly, but was evidently conversant with the writings of some such—those of the *Knownothingarian* school. "Then you don't believe in, and are not sure of your own existence," said I. "No," he responded, "I am sure of nothing." "Suppose then, I bring the point of this pin in contact with your cuticle," I said, "possibly it may wake you up to a consciousness of the fact!" Such a style of argument, however, he did not much approve of. It was rather an extraordinary way of testing his logic—rather too *sharp* a test, he thought.

I was really surprised beyond measure to find that the gentleman had so far lost his wits as to be able to talk so. But he was not a stranger to the writings of philosophers; and he had probably picked up those ideas from some of them, as it is hardly conceivable that any one but a philosopher, or would be philosopher, could entertain them. It appears to be too often the case that when philosophy gets into some men, their wits go out.

Certain scientific gentlemen of the *one idea* school, and that a *know-nothing* one, may dispute the fact, but with regard to *matter* any man of ordinary judgment—provided always, that he be not a philosopher—surely knows, is conscious of the fact, that it exists; that it varies as to

solidity, weight, bulk, etc.; that it has length, breadth, and thickness; that some substances possess the quality of brittleness, while others possess the quality of malleability, or of ductility; that some substances are organic, while others are inorganic; that water is a liquid and not a solid substance; that man is not a monkey, and neither one nor the other, a horse or a donkey, as they may be, it seems, for aught certain philosophers can tell to the contrary. But surely we are not now obliged, any more than our fathers were, to consult philosophy to ascertain whether or not we *know* all these things in relation to matter. When these philosophers were boys they probably knew it all as well as we who, not being philosophers, still retain our boyish notions on the subject.

And then as to our knowing nothing about *mind*—the immaterial mind, or soul—do we not certainly know that it takes cognizance of persons and things, and that it treasures up and retains such knowledge for a more or less lengthened period? Do we not know that it thinks, reasons, and plans; that it feels; that it is joyous or sad, contented or discontented, happy or miserable; that it desires, hopes, and fears; that it loves or hates, revenges or forgives; that it forms a judgment; that it purposes or wills; that it weighs actions, and is influenced by motives, justifying some and condemning others? All this, and much more, we certainly *know;* we have an unmistakable consciousness of it, and the philosopher who presumes to deny it, is simply philosophy-mad.

Our knowledge, as we have seen, extends further, even to Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, Who is revealed to us as dwelling in light inaccessible to mortal vision, and Who sits upon the throne of the universe

reigning supreme. In the heavens and the earth; in His Word and in His works, His wisdom and His goodness are everywhere manifest—

> "In the sun, the moon, the sky,
> On the mountains, wild and high;
> In the thunder, in the rain,
> In the grove, the wood, the plain;
> In the little birds that sing—
> God is seen in everything."

The universe of matter and mind, then, in its subjection to established law, proves the Divine existence—proves the existence of an infinite, intelligent Being, who, having created the universe, placed it under the laws by which it is governed, and by which, under Him, its existence is perpetuated. And evidences, everywhere visible, of infinite skill, power, knowledge, wisdom, beneficence, etc., prove Him to be a Being possessed of all these attributes. To His intelligent creatures, therefore, in the contemplation of His works, He is known—known to be a God possessing all the attributes described as being essential to the construction of the universe as it appears, and as manifested in the diversified phenomena and exquisite harmony of natural development, which are the direct result of those laws which He has established. Leaving the written revelation entirely out of the question, therefore, to talk of an *unknown* God, as Compt, Spencer, Mill, and others have done, is to talk nonsense; and to no less wickedly than absurdly aim at undermining all true religion, natural as well as revealed. In conclusion, allow me to say, that one thing is very evident in reference to such men, that they have not the "eternal life" which is brought to light by the Gospel abiding in them; for "this," said the greatest Teacher, and the wisest Philosopher that has ever appeared

upon the world's theatre,—"this is life eternal, that they might *know* Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

When we began these remarks on Atheism, we had no idea of extending them to the length that we have; but the *growing* importance of the subject will doubtless be deemed a sufficient apology by the critical reader, for their insertion at so great a length in this connection. But, after all, what further evidence need we in proof of the existence of God than the performance of miracle, manifesting, as it does, a Power superior to nature and to natural law? Prove that a real miracle has been performed in connection with the introduction and proclamation of what professes to be God's revealed truth, and you at once prove the existence of God—prove most conclusively not only that the testimony of Scripture is true, but that the Being Who has revealed Himself as its Author, and by Whom the confirmatory miracle was wrought, must of course exist.

M. Renan "does well," no doubt, as St. James says, in believing, as it appears he does, "that there is one God," the God of Creation; but if he does not believe in the God of miracle and revelation, what will it avail him? Such a belief will not save him; for "the devils," the same Apostle tells us, believe this. For such a belief to avail us anything, we must believe also in Jesus. Christ's language to the sceptics of His own day was, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." This does not Renan, as we have abundantly shown, and shall probably have occasion to still further show. Having, then, given expression to the foregoing thoughts on the subject of Atheism, in the hope that they may serve as a check to some youthful aspirant, some embryo philosopher of Atheistic tendency, we will now return to the con-

sideration of what M. Renan has to say on the subject of

MIRACLES.

"We do not say," he remarks, "that miracles are impossible. We say, up to this time a miracle has never been proved." Then if so, historical evidence, however unanswerable, cannot be regarded as proof, which is absurd. According to every just principle of historical criticism, reliable historic evidence may prove the transpiration of supernatural events, no less than of those which are natural. Such authentic historical evidence we have in the Gospel narratives, admitted to be such even by Renan himself. From a variety of collateral and unexceptionable evidence in connection with the evidence furnished by the Gospel record itself, he has himself proved that Jesus Christ existed eighteen hundred years ago; that His mission was to establish in the earth the true Kingdom of God, and that He did it; that in connection therewith, He taught a code of morals that was worthy of the Deity Himself; that this code includes a prohibition of false swearing, lying, etc.; and that His like for sincerity, integrity, and love of truth, has never appeared. All this, and much more to the same effect, although interspersed with much that is contradictory, may be gathered from M. Renan's writings. Others, and even his own admissions in reference to the authenticity of the sacred records which declare it, have proved in addition, that He was no less exalted a personage than the Being of whom it is written, "He cannot lie"—"God manifest in the flesh." This being the case, as Christ Himself gave the people to understand that the mighty works which He did were wrought by the direct power of the Deity whose "fulness" dwelt in Him "bodily," and with whom "all things are possible," designating these wonderful performances not only

"mighty works," but by the very term itself, "miracles"—the necessary and inevitable sequence from these premises is, that they were truly supernatural performances. Jesus Christ neither could nor would lie; He asserted His mighty works to be miracles; therefore they were miracles.

Again: the Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians is accepted as the genuine production of that Apostle. Renan himself classes Paul with good men and the "true sons of God." Now a good man and a true son of God, will not lie in the name of God. Paul therefore did not lie when in that Epistle he asserted that God had bestowed upon some of the first propagators of the faith, himself included, "the gifts of healing, of working miracles,"[1] etc. Real miracles, and not jugglery and imposition, then, were by these men performed; and miracles have thus been proved.

Again: the account given in Acts iv. concerning the chief priests, rulers, and scribes, enemies of our Lord and His apostles, is received as authentic. The enemies to the faith asserted, "that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it." What a reflection this upon those who at this distant day presume to deny what the learned Scribes and Pharisees with all their bitter enmity could not, and with all their cultivated and keen powers of discrimination and opportunities for observation did not, even in a single instance upon record, attempt such denial. Nor had they the slightest possible chance of doing so; for the "mighty works" were invariably of such a character that they could not possibly have been anything short of real miracles wrought by the mighty power of God, and at such times, and under such circumstances, in the open light of day, and directly under the eyes of the people, that it was not

[1] Cor. xii. 10, 29.

possible for them to have been deceived in the matter. The only legitimate conclusion from these premises therefore is, that they were miracles; and which to every unprejudiced mind, have thus been clearly and satisfactorily proved.

M. Renan, however, in opposition to every principle of reason and common sense, will have it that they were all traceable to the credulity of the times in which Jesus lived. "A thousand singular instances," he says, "were related in connection with His cures, in which the credulity of the times gave itself full scope."[1] Perhaps it will not be amiss here, to give an instance or two of M. Renan's credulity. "The healing of the sick," he says, "was considered as one of the signs of the Kingdom of God. There is no doubt that Jesus had in His lifetime the reputation of possessing the greatest secrets of this art. The mere pleasure of seeing Him cures. He gives only a smile or a hope, but these are not in vain."[2] Yes, but results, Renan, results! If you have the smallest particle of candour, and can by any possibility dispossess yourself of your own extraordinary credulity, how about the astonishing results arising from a smile, hope, touch, or other such insignificant means, if unaccompanied by any supernatural power? Besides, forgetful, as usual, of the logical inconsistency it involves, you say in another place that Jesus did not always smile when performing His miracles. Your words are—"He often performs His miracles after He has been besought to do so, and with a degree of reluctance, reproaching those who asked them for the grossness of their minds." And "Once," you say, "this discordance evoked a singular outburst, a fit of impatience, in which the annoyance these perpetual demands of weak minds caused Jesus, breaks forth."[3] And yet on the very occasion to which you refer your readers

[1] Page 193. [2] Page 191. [3] Pages 193—4.

as an illustration (Mark ix. 14–30), the "evil spirit" was cast out, and the cure effected. So you see, that by even your own version of the affair, Christ did something more than "smile" or give an expression of "hope" to this raving lunatic in effecting his cure, as He must also have done in curing other disorders; as, for example, the peculiar disorder of the stomach with which the multitude, being in a desert place and without food, were simultaneously seized; of those also who being dead, could not be expected to either observe His smile or distinctly hear His expressions of hope. Those also who were healed at a distance, as the centurian's servant, *e.g.*, might have afforded our philosopher food for instructive cogitation, had he been so disposed. But he, perhaps, did not know that any instances of healing were upon record other than those which required merely the expression of "a smile or a hope" for their cure!

"It is probable," Renan further remarks, "that the hearers of Jesus were more struck by His miracles than by His eminently Divine discourses."[1] Not unlikely, in some instances, especially if they had the discrimination and credulity of a Renan, who through his learned researches has succeeded in furnishing us with a striking parallel to the miracles of Jesus even in our own times. "In Syria," he says, "they regard as mad or possessed by a demon people who are only somewhat eccentric. A gentle word often suffices in such cases to drive away the demon. Such were, doubtless, the means employed by Jesus."[2] Whoever before heard of a person who was even simply eccentric, and nothing more, renouncing his habits of eccentricity through the influence of "a gentle word"? Eccentric habits, I apprehend, are not so readily cast aside. Such, and such like assertions, therefore, do not, to my mind, appear either

[1] Page 193. [2] Page 193.

reasonable or credible; nor would they, even if true, affect the question as to the reality of Christ's miracles in the least.

Again: in further illustration of the admirable manner in which M. Renan himself sustains the character for credulity with which he has charged the Jews of Christ's day, as well as to further show his inconsistency in charging Jesus, as he has done, with imposition in the performance of His miracles, we quote the following: "Almost all the miracles which Jesus *thought He performed* appear to have been miracles of healing."[1] To believe, as Renan sets forth, that Jesus supposed Himself endowed with miraculous powers, and, on the strength of such supposition, attempted to work miracles in which he so far succeeded as to convince friends and foes, learned and unlearned, that He was really supernaturally endowed, and that His performances were really nothing less than "notable miracles"; and yet, after all, these miraculous performances to be nothing more than a series of impositions—the performer, as Renan is mad enough to think, even imposing upon Himself—to believe this, I say, were to believe in a moral miracle which surpasses every wonder of a physical character that has ever been performed. The manifest absurdity and ridiculousness of the position is its refutation.

So strangely inconsistent and contradictory is M. Renan, in speaking of the miraculous powers of Christ, that in one place he says, because "all antiquity, with the exception of *the great scientific schools* of Greece and their Roman disciples, accepted miracles"—and which, he says, "were regarded at this period as the indispensable marks of the Divine, and as a sign of the prophetic vocation—Jesus was therefore *obliged to choose* between these two alternatives—

[1] Page 191.

either to renounce His mission, or to become a thaumaturgus." And upon the very same page we find him saying that "Jesus not only *believed in miracles*, but had not the least idea of an order of nature regulated by fixed laws. One of His most *deeply-rooted opinions* was that by faith and prayer man has entire power over nature."[1] In one place, speaking of the people's honouring Jesus with the title of "Son of David," Renan says: "He *performed most willingly* the miracles which were asked of Him by those who used this title in addressing Him."[2] In another: "Miracles are ordinarily the work of the public more than of him to whom they are attributed. In a general sense, it is therefore true to say that Jesus was only thaumaturgus and exorcist *in spite of Himself*."[3] Also: "Many circumstances seem to indicate that Jesus only became a thaumaturgus late in life, and *against His inclination*."[4] Again he says: "Even those who did not believe in Him—the Pagans, and persons unacquainted with Him—were struck with those acts, experienced a sentiment of fear, and sought to remove Him from their midst."[5] And then, as if to put a climax to the absurdity of such contradictory statements, on another page he adds: "Two means of proof—miracles and the accomplishment of prophecies—could alone, in the opinion of the contemporaries of Jesus, establish a supernatural mission. Jesus, and especially His disciples, employed these two processes of demonstration *in perfect good faith*;"[6] while upon the page preceding he remarks: "Proud of our *timid honesty*, when we have effected by our scruples what they accomplished by *their falsehoods*, we shall have the right to be severe upon them." And then, again, on page 107 he says: "A radical revolution, embracing even nature itself, was the

[1] Page 189. [2] Page 178. [3] Page 190.
[4] Page 193. [5] Page 196. [6] Page 188.

fundamental idea of Jesus. In His paroxysm of heroic will, *He believed* Himself all powerful. The heavens, the earth, the whole of nature, madness, disease, and death were but His instruments." And yet again, on page 196: "Jesus persistently shunned the performance of the wonders which the multitude would have created for Him." And then, to crown all, he further observes, as before quoted: "Almost all the miracles which Jesus *thought* he performed appear to have been miracles of healing."

Such contradictory passages as these, and many others that might be selected from Renan's work, are, I should say, almost if not altogether without a parallel in the writings of any other author, whether of ancient or modern times. But M. Renan, I would further observe in this connection, must have extraordinary ideas indeed of men's gullibility, if he thinks they can take down such an idea as is contained in the passage last quoted—"miracles which Jesus *thought* He performed." As in the case of the celebrated Darwin, the educated ape of world-wide notoriety, one is certainly sometimes almost forced to believe that the man must have been born minus the faculty of reason.

Strange that the miracles of healing, which Renan, in one place, says Jesus effected by a smile, a gentle touch, or an expression of hope; and here only *thought* He effected; and elsewhere, being conscious of "falsehood" or false pretension on His own part, *felt the vanity of public opinion* which had *imposed upon Him* His reputation of thaumaturgus"[1]—strange that cures He so easily effected, and which, after all, He only pretended to effect, yet really thought He effected, but which, nevertheless, did not remove from Him the character of impostor, or prevent Him from feeling "the vanity of public opinion" which had

[1] Page 194.

"imposed" it upon Him—strange, I say, that such artless, yet artful, but well-intentioned and gentle means, should have occasioned Him so much weariness and exhaustion as M. Renan speaks of. Referring the reader to Luke viii. 46, which simply represents Jesus as saying when in the midst of a crowd, "Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that *virtue* is gone out of me"—referring to this, with his usual good sense and justness of remark, Renan says: "In His miracles we are sensible of *painful effort*—an *exhaustion*, as if something went out of Him."[1]

"I have imposed on myself," says Renan, "the task of verifying all the citations which I have admitted." We find, however, that such citations, whether from the Gospel text or elsewhere, are quite in keeping with the rest of his work: they rarely, if ever, prove that for which they are cited.

The following query, as taken from page 191, is strikingly characteristic: "Who would dare to say," he asks, "that in many cases, always excepting certain peculiar injuries, the touch of a superior being is not equal to all the resources of pharmacy?" Why anyone in his senses, we reply, except the "many cases" are cases of health, and which, therefore, are in no need of the resources of pharmacy; or that the "superior being" referred to is a being endowed with supernatural powers; in which case neither inveterate diseases nor "peculiar injuries" need be excepted, as Renan knows well they were not in the experience and practice of the Great Physician. It is really surprising to find in a work of this description so extraordinary a display of weakness and folly. From such a pen, so talented a writer, it is altogether inexplicable, except on the ground of his having been suffered to fall into a most fatal state of spiritual blindness, as

[1] Page 186.

the consequence of a wilful and persistent hatred to God's revealed truth.

But we have not yet done with Renan's, if not very rational, at all events, somewhat beautiful ideas. Their name is "legion." Another of them is this: "Possession by demons," or, which in other words he styles, "nervous and apparently inexplicable maladies," Jesus calms and cures by "His pure and sweet beauty!" Speaking of "Mary of Magdala," he says: "According to the language of the time, she had been possessed by seven demons. That is, she had been affected with nervous and apparently inexplicable maladies. Jesus, by His pure and sweet beauty, calmed this troubled nature."[1] Beautiful conception! but so strangely absurd that one would think such a philosopher scarcely capable of it—cure those who were possessed with demons, or nervous, frenzied maniacs, if you please, by "His pure and sweet beauty!" in conjunction, no doubt, with one of His lovely "smiles" or sweet expressions of "hope," of which Renan elsewhere speaks, and which the maniac would be so exceedingly likely to observe and be fascinated with! Renan is no doubt a very fair representative of the logic of the infidel school, and, being regarded by some as great, a very fair illustration also of the aphorism, "Great men are not always wise."

Referring to the miracle of five loaves and two fishes with which the five thousand men, besides women and children, were fed, Renan thus remarks: "Jesus, fearing an increase of ill-will on the part of Antipas, took precautions and retired to the desert, where many people followed Him. By exercising an extreme frugality the holy band was enabled to live there, and in this there was naturally seen a miracle."[2] He refers the reader to Mat-

[1] Page 127. [2] Page 154.

thew xiv. 15, and following, and Mark vi. 35, and following, as the ground of this very remarkable comment. But the reader will doubtless agree with me here when I say, that so puerile an explication of this miracle is simply contemptible. It is but one instance, however, among many, of his method of discharging his asserted "duty" of explaining and casting out of the Bible everything of a supernatural or miraculous character. He could not attribute a miracle of this nature to physiological or natural causes, as in the case of cures from a "touch" or a "smile;" nor could he here assert that the ignorance and credulity of the disciples deceived them into the belief that it was a miracle, since deception in such a case was manifestly impossible. However, foiled and disconcerted in these particulars, and evidently deprived of every other device that his fertile genius could invent to explain away the miracle, as a last resort, copying the logic of the fabled wolf with the lamb, he has recourse to the weak and contemptible subterfuge quoted above, basely insinuating that in "extreme frugality" the sacred historians in their ignorance naturally saw a miracle, and recorded it as such.

Such, we repeat, is another illustration of Renan's method of practically applying his cherished "historical principle" which he has ingeniously invented "to explain" away in this creditable manner, all that savours of the supernatural. He has made other practical applications of it to which we shall probably also refer. But if the inventor of this "historic principle" is not more skilful in his practical application of it—if in practically testing its virtue as an infidel weapon of warfare he succeeds no better than he has in the exhibition just given, the reader will doubtless begin to think that both the weapon and its inventor are fit only to

battle with the wind. How truly has the Word of inspiration declared that while "God hath made man upright," he has himself "sought out many inventions,"—some of which are certainly no less discreditable to his dignity as a rational intelligence, than to his character as a moral being. In addition to the school of our French philosopher, we might cite in illustration the pantheistic school, in connection with which, either as "inventors" or copiers, the names of R. W. Emerson, Spencer, Huxley, and J. Stuart Mill, have stood out more or less prominently before the world; the latter of whom, it appears, has signalized himself as one of the "inventors" to whom the inspired Word has reference, by the inauguration of a new system of religious worship, Deifying wives, mothers, and sisters, when they happen to be good, and formally worshipping them whether dead or alive; and should our own wives, mothers, or sisters, not happen to be good, and worthy of such homage, we must look up some worthy specimens belonging to some other man or men, and worship them! Truly our world is advancing, and we may yet see the day when it will not be behind the world in which, in accordance with the principles of his religious philosophy, Mill says, "2 and 2 may make 5; parallel lines may meet; a straight line may return upon itself and enclose a space; and in which there may be effects without a cause!" One thing, however, is very certain, that *our* world has hitherto exhibited no such phenomena; and moreover, that if *lunacy* may be regarded as one of the operating *causes* in our world, we need not look beyond it for an explanation of Mill's system of Theology. But to return to the theological system of M. Renan, which has also its *cause*—a cause originating in the depths of a depraved and an unregenerate nature.

The belief or disbelief of M. Renan's school, as well as of that of the Pantheists who call the universe God, does not depend on evidence at all, inasmuch as they wilfully close their eyes to the rational grounds on which Scripture testimony is based—the only evidence, by the way, that is of any weight whatever when brought to bear upon questions touching the supernatural. Dreamy speculation or theorising in relation to questions of this nature is absolutely worthless, and must necessarily go for nothing; whereas testimony, reliable testimony, as given in confirmation of duly witnessed facts, is everything. But this they reject. Men noted for the holiness of their characters and uprightness of their lives; men having withal mental capacity and powers of penetration and discrimination, at least equal to the most intellectual of their modern detractors—a Moses, an Elijah, Elisha, Samuel, David, and the prophets; a Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, the other Apostles, and Jesus Himself, may with one voice declare, not only that God exists as a personal Being, but that He has revealed Himself to them, delivered to them a Law and Commandments by which the lives of the human family are to be governed, together with an account of man's origin and destiny; and that in confirmation of all which He manifested His power through them in the performance of a series of miracles, which were patent to the then living world, to whom also they appealed at the time as witnesses, and the supernatural character of which neither Jew nor Gentile, learned nor unlearned, could deny—but it is all to no purpose so far as our modern unbelieving savans of the Rationalistic school are concerned. They have invented a theory of their own in relation to the universe, its immutable laws, etc., and by it they are prepared to abide. Passing by the overwhelming

testimony relative to God's revealed account of it, as a thing of naught, they are quite prepared, in the self-sufficiency of their proud minds, to await the issue of nature's future unfoldings.

All the revered authors and leading characters of the Old and the New Testaments may bear an unqualified testimony to the fact that miracles have been performed; and this may be confirmed by the unanimous testimony of all the holiest and best of the ancients—but to rationalistic obtuseness and perversity it is all to no purpose. Even though one should "rise from the dead" and declare it, there would doubtless still be found some who would not believe. Aye, further still, so fully convinced are they of the immutability of nature's laws, and of the undisturbed operation of its forces, that when "the earth shall have waxed old like a garment, and the time of its dissolution have come;" when "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat"—there will perhaps still, in the judgment of these men, be a natural cause for it all; there will probably still be found men, true to their god Nature, and sceptical on the subject of miracles, who will be very capable of explaining it on natural and scientific principles; they will doubtless see in it no more than a very natural eruption of the internal fires concealed in the heart of our earthly volcano! And—in accordance with the principles of Spinosa, who defines a miracle to be a rare event, happening in consequence of some laws that are unknown to us—unless science and scientific Infidels be dissolved with it, when the dead that are in their graves shall have come forth, the judgment be set, the books opened, sentence pronounced, and the wicked "bound hand and foot" and taken to the place of "perdition of ungodly

men," it will still, in the estimation of these gentlemen of nature, be but a remarkable natural phenomenon, a strange freak of their idol god, Nature! And although they will have an eternity of experience in this place for the development of their science, the regions of woe will perhaps afford them no ground for a change in their opinions as to the scientific change in their destiny being caused by a strange erratic freak of immutable Nature, rather than by the direct interposition and special judgment of the Almighty.

On page 191, M. Renan gives us a description of the healing art as practised in the East. "Medicine," he asserts, "was at this period in Judea, what it is still in the East, that is to say, in no respect scientific, but absolutely surrendered to individual inspiration. In such a state of knowledge, the presence of a superior man treating the disease with gentleness, and giving him by some sensible signs the assurance of his recovery, is often a decisive remedy." But suppose this point were admitted as indisputable, what has *it* to do with the "mighty signs and wonders" wrought by Christ? If he means by his "sensible signs" and "individual inspiration" that a magnetic, curative power is evolved, is there any analogy, we would ask, between cures of rheumatic or other kindred affections, said to have been effected by electro-magnetic influence, and the cases of healing and other miracles effected by Christ and His Apostles? None whatever. But as a fitting conclusion to a statement so irrelevant to the subject, speaking of Jesus as "a superior man," he adds—"Convinced that the touching of His robe, the imposition of His hands, did good to the sick, He would have been unfeeling, if He had refused to those who suffered, a solace which it was in His power to bestow." True; but if such were the character and

methods of practice in connection with the healing art in the East, what are we to make of the case of the woman who "spent all her living upon physicians"? Rather costly spending, one might think, for such kind of medical services—little or nothing more than simply a "touch" or some "sensible sign" from the medical man. But how came it to pass that she was, after all, no better while in their hands, "but rather grew worse," until she happened on and touched the "garment" of the Practitioner who made no charge for His cures?[1] Renan explains this also: "There was an infinite charm in His person and His speech;" and the face of the Great Physician, he conceives, must have been very "lovely,"[2] and that, therefore, from its expression or His "touch" efficacy proceeded that did not proceed from a physician whose countenance may have been less beautiful and attractive! What a pity for the suffering inhabitants of the East that their physicians were not all physically beautiful. What an amount of squandered wealth it might have saved them! But as our very original discoverer did not exist in their day, probably this great secret of healing was unknown to them; for had it been, doubtless the law, for humanity's sake, would not have allowed ugly men, or men whose visage was not of the handsomest type, to become physicians!

But as to the beauty of Christ's person, we read indeed that He is "the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely," but we have always understood this morally. The evangelists do not give the slightest hint as to His complexion or features, or to any point that could help the mind to a personal image, other than the remark made by the Pharisees expressive of His having looked old beyond His years. Nor is there anything to be gathered on the sub-

[1] Mark v. 26; Luke viii. 43. [2] Pp. 85, 127, 133, 191.

ject from any early Christian writer. Renan's conception as to the physical beauty of Jesus must, therefore, be purely ideal. Being a philosopher, however, he may have had access to sources of information of which we are ignorant; or, where the Old Testament scriptures, for instance, in speaking of Him, read *physical deformity*, he, perhaps, understands it *physical beauty*, and *vice versa*. His exegesis being scientific, according to his own idea of that term, his rules of interpretation are so diverse from and so much above, or below—as you please—other men's, there is really no knowing how to take him, or, as we have seen, what strange meaning he will draw from any given passage. But this, after all, is not at all surprising, because Renan, you know, is a *rationalist*.

I can assure the reader that it is not at all consonant with my feelings to be writing so much in a condemnatory strain; but such is the character of the work before me—in so odious a light does it represent the character of our blessed Lord, his Apostles, and God's truth generally, that I am really constrained to it from motives of jealousy for the honour and glory of God. So absurdly strange and irrational are his general religious views, taking, as he does, Christ and the Gospels for his guide—so ridiculous his interpretations of Scripture, as shown by his references to Scripture passages in proof of his positions—and so unnaturally strained and whimsical are the efforts which he makes to build up a theory of his own on the foundation of Christ, to the entire subversion of almost everything essential to the spiritual and eternal well-being of man; and all this in so artfully deceptive, highly coloured, and insinuating a manner that it behoves one, in replying, to lay to with a vigour and an earnestness of expression altogether unwonted in the case

of works less fraught with fundamental and fatal errors less attractively written, and therefore less dangerous to the spiritual and eternal interests of such as may be induced to read them.

CHAPTER IX.

MIRACLES.

THOMAS, one of the disciples of our Lord, was not the last to say, "Except I see, I will not believe." Nor were "certain of the Scribes and Pharisees" the last to say, "Master, we would see a sign." The passage, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe," is as applicable to the sceptics of the present day as it was to certain unbelieving Jews in the days of our Lord. Whoever, therefore, may have the happiness to participate in the blessing pronounced by Christ on those "who have not seen, and yet have believed," it is clear that His modern admirer, M. Renan, is not one of them. He would still see "signs and wonders," provided they were performed under certain scientific conditions, and in the presence of certain scientific gentlemen who might be supposed to be competent to judge of their character. A "sign" even from our Lord Himself, however much He may be admired for His probity and honour and general greatness of character, would not be acceptable or considered at all satisfactory, except under such conditions! Possibly, however, our Lord might object to such dictation, even though philosopher Renan were one of a deputation commissioned to broach the subject to Him. He would, perhaps, again exclaim, "There shall no sign be given you," except, it might be added, such as are performed in the presence of the multitude, and as are open to the eyes

of all who choose to be present when they are wrought. But be this as it may, no miraculous sign in confirmation of the Divine origin of the Scriptures may be looked for now, except such as is being produced by the wonder-working power of God in connection with the preaching of "the Word and Gospel of Christ," which is "the power of God unto salvation," supernaturally manifested in the conviction and conversion of sinners through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

On this point the writer of a letter addressed to M. Renan, "Upon the Establishment of the Christian Religion," has expressed himself so admirably that it merits not only an extensive circulation, but the most solemn and earnest consideration of all who may have been in any degree sceptical upon the subject. M. Renan would see a miracle, and the writer attempts to show him one. He says: "Permit me to-day to draw your attention to the establishment of the Christian religion, a fact upon which we naturally differ in opinion. Like you, I have striven to identify its cause with the mere force of man. I have failed in my endeavour. The supernatural, then, has been the only conducting thread which has helped me to escape from the labyrinth where I see you continually seeking to rectify yourself without ever doing it, and condemned to escape therefrom only when you shall have proved that there is nothing miraculous in the establishment of Christianity. Pardon this little digression. I go straight to the work. There is a religion called the Christian, whose founder was Jesus, named the Christ. This religion, which has lasted eighteen centuries, and which calls itself the natural development of that Judaism which ascends near to the cradle of the world, had the Apostles for its first propagators.

"When these wished to establish it, they had for adversaries—The national pride of the Jews; the implacable hatred of the Sanhedrim; the brutal despotism of the Roman emperors; the railleries and attacks of the philosophers; the libertinism and caste-spirit of the Pagan priests; the savage and cruel ignorance of the masses; the fagot and bloody games of the circus. They had an enemy in—every miser; every debauched man; every drunkard; every thief; every murderer; every proud man; every slanderer; every liar. No one of the vices, in fact, which abuse our poor humanity which did not constitute itself their adversary.

"To combat so many enemies, and surmount so many obstacles, they had only—their ignorance; their poverty; their obscurity; their weakness; their fewness. If you had been their contemporary at the moment when they began their work, and Peter had said to you—'Join with us, for we are going to the conquest of the world; before our word Pagan temples shall crumble, and their idols shall fall upon their faces; the philosophers shall be convinced of folly; from the throne of Cæsar we shall hurl the Roman eagle, and in its place we shall plant the cross; we shall be the teachers of the world; the ignorant shall declare themselves our disciples!'—hearing him speak thus, you would have said, 'Be silent, imbecile!' and, as you are tolerant from nature and principle, you would have defended him before the Sanhedrim, and have counselled it to shut up the fisherman of Bethsaida and his companions in a madhouse. And yet, sir, what you would have thought a notable madness is to day a startling reality, with which I leave you face to face."

To the same effect is the following:—"Destitute of all

human advantages, protected by no authority, assisted by no art; not recommended by the reputation of its Author, not enforced by eloquence in its advocates, the word of God grew mightily, and prevailed. Twelve men, poor, artless, and illiterate, we behold triumphing over the fiercest and most determined opposition; over the tyranny of the magistrate, and the subtleties of the philosopher; over the prejudices of the Gentile, and the bigotry of the Jew. They established a religion which held forth high and venerable mysteries, such as the pride of man would induce him to suspect, because he could not perfectly comprehend them; which preached doctrines pure and spiritual, such as corrupt nature was prone to oppose, because it shrunk from the severity of their discipline; which required its followers to renounce almost every opinion they had embraced as sacred, and every interest they had pursued as important; which even exposed them to every species of danger and infamy; to persecution unmerited and unpitied; to the gloom of the prison, and to the pangs of death. Hopeless as this prospect might appear to the view of short-sighted man, the Gospel yet emerged from the obscurity in which it was likely to be overwhelmed by the complicated distresses of its friends, and the unrelenting cruelty of its foes. It succeeded in a peculiar degree, and in a peculiar manner; it derived that success from truth, and obtained it under circumstances where falsehood must have been detected and crushed."[1]

Not so, we may add, with reference to those religions which were propagated mainly by the sword, accompanied with the flattering promise of carnal felicity; as, for example, the Mahommedan, whose acceptance and extension among certain Eastern nations were due to the force of arms, backed by the secularising genius of the religion itself—a

[1] A. R. Encyclopædia.

religion primarily the offshoot of an ambitious Arabian impostor, an Infidel fanatic, professedly recognising the religion of the Bible to have been from God, but that it was now by Divine authority to be regarded as superseded by another, less spiritual indeed, but commending itself to the favourable and ready acceptance of the ignorant idolators by its promises of riches and honour in this world, and the certain prospect of a variety of sensual delights in the world to come. Such, for instance, as a perpetual residence in "gardens of pleasure," some of the rivers of which flow with delicious water, some with milk, some with wine, and others with honey; all taking their rise from the root of the tree *tuba*—a tree of Paradise, the soil of which is composed of the finest wheat flour, and which is said to stand in the palace of Mahommed, though "a branch of it will reach to the house of every true believer."[1] The Moslem "Traditions" say also, that "it will be laden with pomegranates, grapes, dates, and other fruits, of surprising bigness, and of tastes unknown to mortals; so that if a man desire to eat of any particular kind of fruit, it will immediately be presented him; or if he choose flesh, birds, ready dressed will be set before him, according to his wish." They add, "that the boughs of this tree will spontaneously bend down to the hand of the person who would gather of its fruits, and that it will supply the blessed not only with food, but also with silken garments, and beasts to ride on ready saddled and bridled, and adorned with rich trappings, which will burst forth from its fruits; and that the tree is so large, that a person mounted on the fleetest horse would not be able to gallop from one end of its shade to the other in one hundred years."

Wonderful attractions these, no doubt, to those who

[1] See the Koran and Traditions of Mahommed.

would be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," and who are simple enough to believe in them; but, above all, it appears, the company of handsome black-eyed girls, created not of clay, as mortal women are, but of pure musk, is to be "a principal felicity of the faithful." These, the prophet affirms in his Koran, are "free from all natural impurities and defects; are of the strictest modesty; and are secluded from public view in pavilions of hollow pearls."

So much for this phase of the religion of the rich, false prophet, which to the rich voluptuaries of the East was doubtless just as good as no religion at all, and quite as acceptable as the more holy and spiritual religion which it sought to supersede. Mahommed did not profess to be endowed with the power of working miracles, but with the assistance of some of the more opulent of his immediate followers, he succeeded, it appears, in establishing a reputation for unimpeachable truthfulness; and hence the ready credence which was given to a statement that he made in reference to his having gone from Mecca to Jerusalem, and thence to heaven and back in one night, having been admitted to an audience with the Deity, and received several institutions immediately from Him, as he had previously (according to his own statement) from the ministry of Gabriel.

But while such carnal systems of religion require no miracle to ensure their existence and continued propagation among barbarous and semi-barbarous nations, it is far otherwise with the pure and holy religion of the cross. Without a miracle, it must be obvious to the judgment of the candid that a religion of this nature could not have succeeded in an ungodly world such as ours. It has been a miracle from the first, an ever-living one, to the truth of which the world

is a living witness, for it is open to the eyes of every beholder. Its evidence is also cumulative. There is not a new accession to the Church, not an Infidel individual, tribe, or nation, reclaimed, not a soul truly converted and regenerated by the power of Divine Grace, but adds to the already superabounding evidence of the miraculous character of the power of the Gospel. That such conversions to God and accessions to the Church do not arise from *natural inclination* to the holy religion of the Bible, must be evident to every unprejudiced mind, from the notable fact that they include, at the time of conversion, persons of *all ages, habits, and conditions*, and *every diversity of natural disposition and character*.

The propagation of the true religion of Jesus has never, like that of the Moslem, required the help of the sword: it is wholly contrary to its benign spirit and teaching. Nor has its spread and spiritual acceptance ever been really effected by it; on the contrary, the sword, from the first, has done what it could against it. Simply the preaching of "Christ and Him Crucified" for the redemption of the world, as the foundation of all the other holy doctrines of the Gospel, has been the means, under God, through the ministrations of the Spirit, of accomplishing what has hitherto been done towards the conversion of the world. Persecutions dire, heathen and even Christian, so called; men of wealth, dominion, and power; men transformed into blood-thirsty, merciless demons, have done their utmost to banish the holy religion from the earth, but they could not. Still it remains, and still it extends. Still, in obedience to their Head, the Ambassadors of the Cross go forth, and as they go preach the glad tidings of salvation through the blood and righteousness of "the Holy One and the Just." Yea,

and still, as the Ambassadors of the Most High, sustained and led on by nothing less than the Almighty energy of His eternal Spirit, will they continue to preach until the predicted time come when "the heathen shall be given unto Christ for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession;" and when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea." Resistless is its onward march; mighty is the truth, and must prevail.

When we consider the religious struggles and bloody persecutions, internal and external, to which the Church (including both the true and the nominal) has been subjected, the mind is inevitably led to the conclusion that, as a counterpoise to these conflicting and sanguinary elements which have ever been associated with its history, there must from its original institution have existed in connection with it, a principle of Divine vitality and power, the omnipotence of which has alone preserved it from utter and everlasting extinction. No religion in the world ever has, or ever could have withstood such a complication of opposing elements, or have passed through such a sifting, fiery ordeal as has the religion of the Cross, and live. But the fact that this holy religion has lived through it all, that the fires of persecution have but had the effect of purifying it from the worldly elements which were gathering around it, and that it is now making rapid and unparalleled conquests among the nations of the earth, bidding fair to become ere long the universal and only recognised religion in the world—demonstrates that it has God for its Author, the redemption of fallen humanity for its end, and a miracle of Providence and of Grace for its continued sustentation and success.

We will now return to the consideration of some of the

further remarks of M. Renan upon the subject. His observations on the raising of Lazarus are strikingly characteristic. They evince a state of mind that is madly determined, right or wrong, to pursue its prescribed course in spite of every obstacle, however obviously insurmountable—resolved to be rationally stopped by nothing, through it, or under it, or over it, he has determined to blindly endeavour to go! In his remarks on this miracle, he says: "Tired of the cold reception which the Kingdom of God found in the Capital, the friends of Jesus wished for a great miracle which should strike powerfully the incredulity of the Hierosolimites. The resurrection of a man known at Jerusalem appeared to them most likely to carry conviction. As always happens in the lives of great and inspired men, He *suffered* the miracles opinion demanded of Him rather than performed them. It must be acknowledged, however, that the way John narrates the incident differs widely from those descriptions of miracles, the offspring of the popular imagination, which fills the synoptics. Let us add, that John is the only evangelist who has a precise knowledge of the relations of Jesus with the family of Bethany, and that it is impossible to believe that a mere creation of the popular mind could exist in a collection of remembrances so entirely personal. It is, then, probable that the miracle in question was not one of those purely legendary ones for which no one is responsible. In other words, we think that something really happened at Bethany which was looked upon as a resurrection. Fame already attributes to Jesus two or three works of this kind. The other miracles of Jesus were transitory acts, spontaneously accepted by faith, exaggerated by popular fame, and were not again referred to after they had taken place. This was a real event held to be publicly notorious, and one by which it was hoped to

silence the Pharisees. The enemies of Jesus were much irritated at all this fame. They endeavoured, it is said, to kill Lazarus. It is certain that from that time a council of the chief priests was assembled, and that in this council the question was clearly put: 'Can Jesus and Judaism exist together?'"[1] To all which, Renan adds: "It seems that Lazarus was sick, and that in consequence of receiving a message from the anxious sisters, Jesus left Perea. They thought that the joy Lazarus would feel at His arrival might restore him to life." And how consistently they gave practical expression to such joyous hopes as to his recovery, M. Renan proceeds to tell us thus: "Perhaps, also, the ardent desire of silencing those who violently denied the divine mission of Jesus, carried His enthusiastic friends beyond all bounds. It may be that Lazarus, still pallid with disease, caused himself to be wrapped in bandages as if dead, and shut up in the tomb of his family."[2] Rather a wholesome and comfortable state and place for a sick man to be shut up in, one might suppose! No wonder that he came out convalescent after some four days' close confinement there! The salubrity of the confined air of the tomb, together with the consoling thought of being surrounded with the ministering ghosts of the dead, who are reported to reside in such places, had, no doubt, a wholesome effect upon his spirits, and a resuscitating effect upon his previously fast ebbing life! Marvel of marvels! The man who can be credulous enough to believe and teach such a doctrine as this, must, I should say, be a monomaniac; and the expression falsely applied by an enemy to Paul, may surely with the greatest of propriety be applied to him—"Renan, thou art beside thyself; much learning hath made thee mad."

But the finishing stroke is, that "Jesus" who had *suffered*

[1] Page 251. [2] Page 251.

and been all this time privy to the miracle which was thus being executed for Him, after sympathetically "groaning in spirit," (which Renan describes as "an epileptic and convulsive principle") "desiring," Renan says, "to see once more him whom He had loved, the stone being removed, Lazarus came forth in his bandages, his head covered with a winding sheet." And "this re-appearance," he informs us, "would naturally be regarded as a resurrection;" [1] leaving the reader to understand that either it was "*natural*" as soon as the stone was removed from the door of the tomb for the body to come forth, bound and all as it was, [1] or that a ministering ghost of the place had brought him forth and laid him down in the midst of the people; and since the Invisible One, no doubt, worked by natural laws, it could not, of course, be called a miracle! A remarkable genius, truly, is Renan's, for if it sometimes leads him into singular straits, it always manages to contrive some sort of a way out of them—if not very rational, at any rate quite plausible and satisfactory to his own mind, no doubt.

Before closing our remarks on this point, to do Renan justice, we must give him credit for another little inconsistency: "Being intimately persuaded that Jesus was a thaumaturgus," he says, "Lazarus and his two sisters may have aided in the execution of one of His miracles . . . by means of whose weakness they were well aware." [2] Now had Jesus been a true "thaumaturgus," one might reasonably suppose that He could have dispensed with their aid; and so, if consistent, Lazarus and his sisters must have thought, had they been "intimately persuaded that Jesus was a thaumaturgus," in other words, that He was truly endowed with miraculous powers. But in a few lines below, Renan continues: "The state of their conscience was that of the pos-

[1] Jn. xi. 44. [2] Page 252.

sessed ones in convents, drawn by the influence of the world in which they live, and by their own belief, into feigned acts. As to Jesus, He was no more able than St. Bernard or Francis d'Assisi, to moderate the avidity for the marvellous displayed by the multitude, and even by His own disciples." The idea here conveyed, when stripped of its wordy sophistry, is this: These friends of Jesus, the family of Bethany, being "His own disciples," had an "avidity for the marvellous," and being also predisposed to "feigned acts," they therefore, "by means of whose weakness they were well aware"—by means which they knew to be as ridiculous as they were absurd, and as inconsiderate and unnatural as they were dangerous to the life of him whom Renan represents as "still pallid with disease"—by such means "they may have aided Jesus in the execution of" a something that should appear to them and to others very wonderful: thus at once gratifying their "avidity for the marvellous," and confirming themselves in the belief (of which they were already "intimately persuaded") that Jesus was a thaumaturgus!

Perhaps it was their persistent itching for the marvellous that forced the tears from Jesus' eyes ("Jesus wept") when He saw the mourners weeping; and perhaps it was because He could not perform something wonderful without their assistance that forced the tears from the Weeper's eyes. Perhaps, also, the sympathizers who are said to have wept with the bereaved, were let into the grand secret, that the Master, with their united assistance, was about to perform a glorious imposition upon them, to gratify their own and the rest of the people's "avidity for the marvellous," at the expense of poor, sick Lazarus in the coffin and the tomb! The reader must bear in mind that our philosopher admits the circumstances of this sham performance to be authentic

and true. But what, may we ask, is the free-thinking world coming to, when even its foremost leaders are thus insane? No objections to *free*-thinking, however, but we may be pardoned for supposing that it ought to have at least the semblance of *rational* thinking. But how truly has the Word of the Most High said of such men, that—"Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools."

In speaking of the miracle of our Lord's Resurrection, Renan says: "The cry, 'He is risen!' quickly spread amongst the disciples. Love caused it to find ready credence everywhere. What had taken place? In treating of the history of the apostles, we shall have to examine this point, and to make inquiry into the origin of the legends relative to the resurrection." Such "inquiry" has doubtless, ere this, been made, and is, no doubt, just as candid, rational, and satisfactory, as those we have noticed in reviewing the work before us. We find, however, that he did not wait for the publication of his "History of the Apostles" before making known to the world the general result of his "inquiry" on the subject referred to; for on page 296 of his "Life of Jesus," we find the following query with a reply to it, displaying, as may be supposed, since he is in this respect pretty consistent throughout, his usual depth of judgment, and characterized by his customary logic when treating of such matters:—"Had His body been taken away," he asks, "or did enthusiasm, always credulous, create afterwards the group of narratives by which it was sought to establish faith in the resurrection? *In the absence of opposing documents* this can never be ascertained." In other words, it is hereby intimated that all history that is on record upon the subject is in favour of the doctrine of Christ's resurrection; but because there is an entire

"absence of opposing documents," which, of course, is strongly confirmatory of the fact, this shrewd philosopher arrives at the conclusion that the truth of it "can never be ascertained!" Rather a startling deduction this for one from whom the world has a right to expect the candour and judgment of an historian. Had there been the slightest officially recorded opposition to the doctrine of His resurrection, handed down to us from sources approved of by M. Renan, however manifestly arising from malice and hatred to the truth, he would have readily found in this a pretext for asserting it quite an ascertainable fact that it was all an imposition. But the absence of such documentary evidence much confuses him, and drives him to his wit's end; as might be expected, however, it has not driven him from his persistent adherence to the article of his creed which discards everything partaking of the supernatural.

It is noteworthy, however, as an additional evidence of their ingenuousness, candour, sincerity, and truthfulness, that the Evangelists themselves have furnished us with such "documentary evidence," by handing down to posterity a record of the fact that the Jews were taught by their Rulers to believe that the resurrection of Jesus had not taken place, but that His disciples had come and stolen Him away at night while the soldiers, who were appointed to keep watch, slept—"slept," they said; that is, *all slept*, for if any of this armed guard had been awake, they would not, of course, have allowed the body to be taken away; but if they all slept, how could they have known, as the Rulers would fain make the people believe, that "His disciples came at night and stole Him away." A money bribe offered to the soldiers as the price of a lie, however, as is usual among unprincipled men, answered the wily purpose

of "the chief priests and elders" who had "assembled and taken counsel" together, after having received the true and faithful report of the *guard* who had borne witness to the miraculous events of the night.[1]

This absurd fabrication may have met with a ready acceptance among certain of the enemies of our Lord; but whether it did or did not, from the position which Renan occupies in relation to Scripture testimony as to the miracle of the resurrection, he cannot, of course, rationally accept such "documentary evidence" against the truth of the miracle, since it is a part of the evidence given by our Lord's disciples themselves in confirmation of His resurrection, their testimony concerning which he rejects. Renan's remarks under this head are thus concluded: "Let us say, however, that the strong imagination of Mary Magdalen played an important part in this matter."[2] And let *us* say, that the "strong" but sadly perverted "imagination" of M. Renan, "has played an important part" in the creation of this presumptuous though fitting sequel to his most uncandid, illogical, and absurd reasoning on the subject.

M. Renan has favoured us with a "bit of his mind" also in reference to a commission of learned men being appointed to inquire into the pretentions of a thaumaturgus, were he, in the present day, to "present himself with credentials sufficiently important to be discussed. This commission would choose a corpse to be experimented upon, assure itself that the death was real, would select the room in which the experiment should be made, would arrange the whole system of precautions," etc. "But who does not see," he asks, "that no miracle ever took place under those conditions?" And who but the wilfully blind, we would

[1] Matt. xxviii. 11–15. [2] Page 296.

ask, does not see that the Almighty Worker of Miracles, by whose power alone they can be wrought, is not to be dictated to in any such a manner? Puny scientific mortals may, in their boasted pride and folly of intellect, think that the Almighty cannot work miracles of a character sufficiently distinct from the petty jugglery of impostors as to render it manifest to all ranks and conditions that "the finger of God" is in them, without the institution of a system of human precautions in connection therewith, but the people in general, who are certainly not less distinguished for their common sense than are certain scientific gentlemen, I apprehend, have no such narrow-minded views as to the limited power of the Almighty. Besides, in view of the character of Christ's works which they frequently saw before their eyes, such a commission would have been preposterous. The nearest approach to it that can consist with common sense, His enemies, the Jewish priests and doctors, had recourse to in the summoning of councils to consider not so much the miraculous character of His works, which were patent to all, but how they might get rid of both Him and them—their jealousy and hatred leading them to believe, or pretend to believe, that He was working under Satanic agency.

The Rev. R. Watson, author of the "Institutes" bearing his name, says—"These things were not done in a corner, nor was the age dark and illiterate and prone to admit fables. The Augustine age was the most learned the world ever saw. The love of arts, sciences, and literature, was the universal passion in almost every part of the Roman empire, where Christianity was first taught in its doctrines, and proclaimed in its facts; and in this inquisitive and discerning era, it rose, flourished, and established itself, with

much resistance to its doctrines, but *without being once questioned as to the truth of its historical facts*."

If "up to this time," as M. Renan avers, "miracles have never been proved," then I affirm that nothing under the sun can be proved by historical evidence. Does not Renan himself quote as authentic narrative (p. 196) the circumstance of Christ's enemies being filled with fear and dread on the occasion of His having suffered the legion of devils which He had cast out of the possessed man to enter and cause the death of their swine, which, as Jews, they were unlawfully keeping? And does not the dread of Him, of which Renan speaks, in connection with the circumstance narrated, assuming, as it did, the significant form of praying Him to depart out of their coasts,[1] prove that it was the miraculous power which had caused the destruction of their property, that they were in dread of, and not simply the harmless Person of the good, the meek, the lovely Jesus, as Renan elsewhere represents Him to be? Again, does not the fact that Christ's miracles extorted from His bitterest enemies an acknowledgment of their reality, but that they were performed through the agency of the leader of the fallen angels, demonstrate that there could have been no imposition about the miracle itself? An eagerness to discredit His pretensions through their implacable hatred to the holy truths He taught, would induce them to employ every means in their power for the discovery of imposition, had any of His miracles furnished the slightest possible ground for such an attempt; but the universal acknowledgment from high and low, from friend and foe, was, that His miracles were not impositions but realities. And as to His enemies imputing His power to Satanic agency, a better reply than that given by Christ Himself cannot be con-

[1] Mark v. 17.

ceived:—"If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you."[1]

Again: the record being true—and this is not assumed, but, as we have seen,[2] historically proved—is not the very first work of the kind that Christ wrought of such a nature as to prove it a miracle? Could there have been any difficulty in distinguishing between water and wine, either on the part of the servants who were ordered to fill the vessels with water, or of the guests who afterwards drank what was poured from them? Some men's mental vision appears to be so distorted when brought to bear upon a question involving anything of a religious nature, that they do not appear to know, or do not care to know, when it is proved and when it is not. But in case miracle-working at an entertainment of the kind referred to should prove of too private a character to suit the fastidiousness of Infidel logic, perhaps the record of miracles performed in the presence of Scribes, Pharisees, and Doctors of the Law, may suit them better. Luke, for example, tells us that "the Scribes and Pharisees watched Him, whether He would heal on the Sabbath-day; that they might find an accusation against Him. . . . . And looking round about upon them all, He said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other. . . . . And He came down and stood in the plain, and the company of His disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear Him, and to be healed of their

[1] Matt. xii. 26—28. [2] See Chapters 1 and 2.

diseases; and they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him; for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all." Luke vi. 7–19. "And it came to pass on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were *Pharisees and Doctors of the Law sitting by* which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them. And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: And . . . He said unto the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, Arise and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God." Luke v. 17–25. Also, our Lord's open appeal to His enemies to consider His public works as a proof of His Divine power and Messiahship: "Jesus answered them, the works that I do in My Father's Name, they bear witness of Me. If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."[1] Some of the works here referred to are in Matthew xi. 4, 5, thus enumerated:—"Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me."

Again: Christ's enemies themselves being judges, there is not the slightest ground for question as to the supernatural character of the "mighty works" which He wrought among them. In John xi. 47, 48, it is thus written: "Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What

[1] John x. 25, 37, 38.

do we? for this Man *doeth many miracles.* And if we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." His unrelenting persecutors afterwards pursued His Apostles in the same spirit; and the decision of their council as to the character of the miracles wrought in Christ's name by the Apostles was the same. On the occasion of the healing of a man who had been impotent from his mother's womb, "the high priest, with the rulers, elders, and scribes," held a council in Jerusalem, and having set Peter and John in their midst, asked them by what power or by what name they had wrought the miracle. "Then Peter, being filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. . . . And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, "What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we can say nothing against it."[1]

These men "could say nothing against it!" What a pity that M. Renan, or some one endowed with equal learning and scientific skill, did not form one of their council. *He* could have said something against it, no doubt; for to test

[1] Acts v. 22.

the miraculous character of a work, says this scientific gentleman, "requires great precautions and long habits of scientific research."[1] But to this we would simply reply, that having dwelt at considerable length on the nature of the individual miracles performed by Christ and His Apostles, we need not here repeat what has been already said. Suffice it that the character of each and all was such as to preclude the possibility of deception to even a single observer from any class of society; and this, in view of plainly-stated and well-authenticated facts, any unprejudiced man possessing a grain of candour and common sense must freely admit. We may also observe for the edification of this scientific gentleman, should he have an opportunity of scanning these pages, that science is in great part at once the cause and detector of modern jugglery and imposition; and to the detection of that to which it mainly gives rise it must be confined. If it essays to inquire into and explain the supernatural, it oversteps the boundary of its legitimate sphere. The realm of nature is its domain; the miraculous, like its Divine Author, is above and beyond it, and *is* of such a nature, notwithstanding Renan's assertion to the contrary, that the "common people," without the aid of science, are capable of testing it.

Allow me to add, that there are not wanting to "the common people" frequent opportunities of testing the virtue and power of the supernatural, even in modern times. Many a spiritual "new creation" has been supernaturally effected among them, the Divine character of which they are as capable of testing and understanding, as the "natural man," M. Renan, is of testing and understanding the nature of any ordinary phenomena belonging to his legitimate sphere, the realm of physical nature. Miracles, Monsieur

[1] Page 29.

Renan, allow me to further say, are not contrary to the experience even of the present. There has been many a special interposition of Providence, many a miraculous answer to the prayer of faith offered on behalf of the sick and the needy, even in our own day. Dispute it you may, but contravene the fact you cannot. A "cloud of living witnesses," embracing men as learned and talented as the world can produce, can vouch for its reality and truth. And multitudes more, through the power of the Spirit, will continue to arise and testify to the efficacy of prayer in these respects, until the time shall arrive when both physical and spiritual healing, so far as they relate to our world, shall be at an end.

CHAPTER X.

PROPHECY.

THE power by which the vista of ages is pierced, and the events relating to the remote future revealed, must necessarily be Divine; and the fulfilment of predictions uttered at periods long anterior to the events must therefore afford irrefragable evidence of their Divine origin—a most convincing proof to every unbiassed mind that the person by whom the predictions were uttered must have been under Divine and supernatural illumination. Next to miracles, prophecy, genuine prophecy, may justly be regarded as the highest evidence that can be given of a supernatural communion with the Deity. It does not indeed carry with it any extrinsic proof of its Divine origin when first enunciated, except when accompanied by the exercise of powers otherwise miraculous with which God's prophets were also endowed; but as the future gradually unfolds, and events transpire in exact and manifest accordance with the terms of prophecy, ultimating in its literal and complete fulfilment, it affords conclusive evidence that the utterances were Divine, that the prophets were supernaturally endowed, and that the doctrines taught by them were dictated by the Spirit of God—that, in short, in the expressive language of St. Peter, "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

As an illustration of the fulfilment of prophecy so far as it respects the present state of the Holy Land, we will give, by way of introduction to what follows on the general subject, an account of its past and present condition as related first by Canon Tristram, who appears to have a thorough knowledge of the country; and next, as given from personal observation by M. Renan himself:—"I am thoroughly acquainted," says the Canon, "with Southern Judea. The whole country south of Hebron is a series of rolling downs, bare and covered with turf, something like the Sussex Downs, but with a richer soil. Here every mile or two testifies by its ruined heaps to the density of a past population, and the very arrangement of the old houses is a proof of the former value of land. They are almost always clustered on the sides of steep hills, and their rear portion is hollowed out of the cliff after the manner of tombs. We are told that the Horites, *i.e.*, cave men, occupied the land before the Amorites, and these appear to have been their dwellings; more extensively excavated, and fronts of masonry added, by their Jewish successors. These ruins have all preserved their traditional names in the vernacular Arabic; we were able to identify the unchanged names of most of the cities of Judah to which David sent presents during his exile at Ziklag. The whole region is desolate, without inhabitants, save a few wandering Phalin and Kaabina Arabs, whose supply of water is often precarious. Yet the environs of these ruined towns are dotted with wells, scores of which I have examined, but all dry. Sometimes more than a dozen could be counted round a single town. Again, close to the gate of each city may be seen, sometimes broken, but very often still perfect, the old oil-press—the common property of the community, a large

circular trough, like a huge cider-press, sometimes hewn out of the native rock, sometimes with the crushing-stone, like a great mill-stone, lying by its side. Yet for ages not an olive-tree has existed in the district. Again, the whole of the bare hill sides are studded with the ancient wine-presses (I once found eleven in the course of a morning's ride), among the few undoubted remains of the Israelitish stone-work of the regal period—simple contrivances—two parallel troughs, hewn in the native rock, with holes so pierced between them that the juice could drain into the lower one. The disproportionate number of these wine-vats is explained by the fact that while the olives could be best carried home, the grapes could not bear transportation, and therefore each proprietor had his own press in his vineyard. But now from Eshcol to Beersheba not a vine exists. Yet we have these records carved in the rocks, of the days when Judah did 'bind his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.'

"Whence has come the change? Simply from the denudation of timber. The primeval forest was exchanged by man for the olive, with its evergreen verdure filling the valleys and crowning the hill tops. These attracted showers from those clouds which now pass over the arid region to waste their treasures on the deserted forests of Gilead. And then the slopes were terraced and clad with vines, while the fig tree studded every corner. Nor were the waters wasted as they drained from the hills. Long conduits winding on their sides conveyed them to carefully cemented reservoirs, of which the country is full, and whence, in summer, the gardens were watered by the foot. But the havoc of war, neglect, and misgovernment, destroyed the olives, the vines

soon perished, the terraces crumbled, the conduits were broken or choked, and *the land is desolate.*"

In speaking of his visit to the Holy Land, the birth-place of Him of whom the prophets foretold, M. Renan says: "I have traversed, in all directions, the country of the Gospels; I have visited Jerusalem, Hebron, and Samaria; scarcely any important locality of the history of Jesus has escaped me. All this history, which at a distance seems to float in the clouds of an unreal world, thus took a form, a solidity, which astonished me. The striking agreement of the texts with the places, the marvellous harmony of the Gospel ideal with the country which served it as a frame-work, are like a revelation to me. I had before my eyes a fifth Gospel, *torn but still legible.*" [1]

In describing the town of Nazareth, where Jesus was "brought up," Renan says: "The horizon from the town is limited. But if we ascend a little, the plateau, swept by a perpetual breeze, which overlooks the highest houses, the prospect is splendid. On the West are seen the fine outlines of Carmel, terminated by an abrupt point which seems to plunge into the sea. Before us are spread out the double summit which towers above Megiddo; the mountains of the country of Shechem, with their holy places of the patriarchal age; the hills of Gilboa, the small picturesque group to which are attached the graceful or terrible recollections of Shunem and of Endor; and Tabor with its beautiful rounded form, which antiquity compared to a bosom. Through a depression between the mountains of Shunem and Tabor, are seen the valley of the Jordan, and the high plains of the Peræa, which form a continuous line from the Eastern side. Anthony the Martyr, at the end of the sixth century drew an enchanting picture of the fertility of the environs, which

[1] See his *Introduction.*

he compared to Paradise. Some valleys on the Western side fully justify this description. Such was the horizon of Jesus. This enchanted circle, cradle of the Kingdom of God, was for years His world."

This is a glowing description of the "country of the Gospels," no doubt; nor is it by any means a purely fanciful one. But from the account which M. Renan gives of it, one thing in particular is strikingly apparent, that he has proved quite to his own satisfaction that the land of the Bible is not "an unreal world," as it seemed to him to be previously to his having visited and looked upon the "goodly land" for himself. The "History of Jesus," he says, then "took a form, a solidity, which astonished me." And so, we may add, since his rule appears to be, "see for yourself and then believe," if he had, when in the Holy Land, been afforded an opportunity of witnessing "the miracles of Jesus," they also would have doubtless taken "a form and a solidity," which would have "astonished" him. The "country of the Gospels" he has seen for himself, and has proved it to be as to names, places, existing customs, etc., in exact accordance with the Gospel history; and he therefore so far believes. But his faith, poor fellow, is weak, and he must therefore see in order to believe; but, unfortunately, the miracles and prophesying having all disappeared with the persons to whom they were attributed, not a visible vestige of them remained, and in reference to these therefore, poor Renan is doomed to return with the lament, "I have not seen and therefore cannot believe!"

In immediate connection with the foregoing quotation from Renan, the beautiful scene is somewhat changed. He represents it to be very different now from what it once was. "The fountain," he says, "where formerly the life and

gaiety of the little town were concentrated, is destroyed; its broken channels contain now only a muddy stream. Southwards the more sombre aspect of the Samaritan hills foreshadows the dreariness of Judea beyond, parched as by a scorching wind of desolation and death." But "even in our times," he continues, "Nazareth is still a delightful abode, the only place, perhaps, in Palestine in which the mind feels itself relieved from the burden which oppresses it in *this unequalled desolation*."

Again, in describing, as it once was, the country of the Galileans, whom he represents as "an energetic, brave, and laborious people," he says: "The country abounded in fresh streams and in fruits; the large farms were shaded with vines and fig trees; the gardens were filled with trees bearing apples, walnuts, and pomegranates. We may judge of this by some enclosures in the neighbourhood of Nazareth. The aspect of the great farms is still well preserved in the south of the country of Tyre (ancient tribe of Asher). Traces of the ancient Palestinian agriculture, with its troughs, threshing floors, winepresses, mills, &c., cut in the rock, are found at every step. . . . The saddest country in the world is, perhaps, the region round about Jerusalem. Galilee, on the contrary, was a very green, shady, smiling district, the true home of the Song of songs and the songs of the well-beloved. During the two months of March and April the country forms a carpet of flowers of an incomparable variety of colours. The animals are small and extremely gentle:—delicate and lively turtle doves; blue birds so light that they rest on a blade of grass without bending it; crested larks, which venture almost under the feet of the traveller; little river tortoises, with mild and lively eyes; storks, with grave and modest mien, which, laying aside all timidity, allow

man to come quite near them, and seem almost to invite his approach. In no country in the world do the mountains spread themselves out with more harmony or inspire higher thoughts. Jesus seems to have had a peculiar love for them. The most important acts of His Divine career took place upon the mountains. It was there that He was the most inspired; it was there that He held secret communion with the ancient prophets; and it was there that His disciples witnessed His transfiguration.

"This beautiful country has now become sad and gloomy through the ever-impoverishing influence of Islamism. But still everything which man cannot destroy breathes an air of freedom, mildness, and tenderness, and at the time of Jesus it overflowed with happiness and prosperity."[1] And in a note he adds: "The horrible state to which the country is reduced, especially near Lake Tiberias, ought not to deceive us. These countries, now scorched, were formerly terrestrial paradises. The baths of Tiberias, which are now a frightful abode, were formerly the most beautiful places in Galilee. Josephus extols the beautiful trees of the plain of Genesareth, where there is no longer a single one."

Of "the valley in which the Lake of Tiberias is situated," Renan further remarks: "Let us run over it step by step, and endeavour to raise the mantle of aridity and mourning with which it has been covered by the demon of Islamism. . . The lake, the horizon, the shrubs, the flowers, are all that remain of the little canton, three or four leagues in extent, where Jesus founded His Divine work. The trees have totally disappeared. In this country, in which the vegetation was formerly so brilliant that Josephus saw in it a kind of miracle—Nature, according to him, being pleased to bring hither side by side the plants of cold countries, the

[1] Pp. 75, 76.

productions of the torrid zone, and the trees of temperate climates, laden all the year with flowers and fruits,—in this country travellers are obliged now to calculate a day beforehand the place where they will the next day find a shady resting-place. The lake has become deserted. A single boat, in the most miserable condition, now ploughs the waves once so rich in life and joy. But the waters are always clear and transparent. . . . The heat on the shore is now very oppressive. The lake lies in a hollow 650 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and this participates in the torrid conditions of the Dead Sea. An abundant vegetation formerly tempered those excessive heats. Josephus considered the country very temperate. No doubt there has been here, as in the *Campagna* of Rome, a change of climate introduced by historical causes. It is Islamism, and especially the Mussulman reaction against the Crusades, which has withered as with a blast of death the district preferred by Jesus. The beautiful country of Genesareth never suspected that beneath the brow of this peaceful wayfarer its highest destinies lay hidden. Dangerous countryman! Jesus had been fatal to the country which had the formidable honour of bearing Him. Having become a universal object of love or of hate, coveted by two rival fanaticisms, Galilee, as the price of its glory, has been *changed to a desert.*"

M. Renan was, perhaps, not aware that in thus describing from personal observation the very remarkable change that had taken place in that once beautiful and fertile country, as described by ancient authors, he was in reality writing in confirmation of ancient prophecies relating thereto—prophecies many hundreds of years before recorded in the Bible, and now literally fulfilled, and their fulfilment confirmed by the observation and researches of a man who is an openly-

avowed enemy to all revealed religion, and who regards the prophecies of Scripture relative to the Jewish nation and the world's Redeemer as nothing more nor less than "a gigantic dream!"

It is to mutable "nature" and "Islamism," says M. Renan, that this wonderful change in the general aspect of things in that once-favoured land is traceable. It is to "Islamism" only as the secondary cause, say we. "The cities shall be laid waste, and the land *shall be desolate*," was the repeated declaration of the Most High respecting it.[1] Primarily, therefore, it is to the curse of God, as predicted by its own prophets. It is the verification of Scripture, the fulfilment of prophecy, and an earnest of what is yet to take place in that land of "unequalled desolation." Sin-stricken and crushed to the earth as for generations that down-trodden people has been, there is yet hope for them. It gleams through the prophecies of Holy Scripture, and is, therefore, in the mind and purpose of their Divine Author. "God can create, and He can destroy." God can "break down;" He also can "build up." And when "the fulness of the Gentiles" shall have come in, further predictions relative to the Jewish nation will, before a wondering world, and to the eternal confusion of the "discreet doubters" alluded to by M. Renan, be literally fulfilled. Although now "dispersed among the Gentiles" over the entire face of the earth, as was predicted of them thousands of years ago, when God threatened to visit them for their sins and punish them for their iniquities, in this widely-scattered state they are, by the special providence of God, unlike all other scattered nations of the past, preserved as distinct and peculiar a people as when having a national existence in their own land—their national character, enthusiasm,

[1] See Ezek. xii. 20; Isa. vi. 11; Lev. xxvi. 33; Deut. xxviii. 64.

religion, and national hopes still the same. Their history is perfectly unique in the history of nations, and affords a living demonstration of the truth of the Bible in general, and of the prophecies relating to themselves in particular.

Renan, however, as he can by no means entertain the notion of a special providence, and the fulfilment of prophecy in their case, with his accustomed penetration, thanks the "synagogues" for their preservation as a distinct people for so lengthened a period, notwithstanding the prolonged and severe persecutions they have had to encounter even to a very recent date. His words are: "Thanks to the synagogues, Judaism has been able to sustain intact eighteen centuries of persecution. They were like so many little separate worlds, in which the national spirit was preserved."[1] To this we reply, that both their dispersion and their distinct preservation were the direct result of the Divine purpose respecting them, as we gather from the many prophecies in Holy Scripture of which they were made the subject. In the very beginning of their history as a nation, Moses forewarned them of what would be the consequence were they to rebel against God, and refuse to obey His commandments. Thus, in Deut. iii. 29 we read the following prediction as delivered by Moses to the Israelites previous to their having entered into the possession of the land which by promise and prediction was theirs, in accordance with the terms of God's covenant with Abraham, "I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God,"[2]—in Deut. iii. 29, we read: "For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do

[1] Page 118. [2] Gen. xvii. 8.

evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands." Again we read: "But if ye will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these commandments; and if ye shall despise My statutes, or if your soul abhor My judgments, so that ye will not do all My commandments, but that ye break My covenant; I also will do this unto you. . . . I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of My covenant; and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation . . . And your enemies which shall dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste." In this same chapter[1] we read also of a particular providence exercised in their preservation. "And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God . . . If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against Me, and that also they have walked contrary unto Me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity, then will I remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land."

No, Renan, the extraordinary preservation of this people in full possession of all their distinguishing characteristics, is

[1] Lev. xxvi.

not attributable to their "synagogues," but to the decree of Him who has spoken of them in such language as the foregoing and the following: "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of Hosts is His name. If those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever. Thus saith the Lord; if heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord."[1] "I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished."[2]

And the grand object for which they are thus preserved is that they may yet be restored to their own land and serve God in it, according to the purport of the following predictions: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. But the Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the North, and from all the lands whither He had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers."[3] "Many nations are gathered together against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eyes look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they His counsel: for He shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thine horn iron,

[1] Jer. xxxi. 35-37. [2] Jer. xxx. 11. [3] Jeremiah xvi. 14, 15.

and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth."[1] "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up My hand to the Gentiles, and set up My standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers."[2] "Thus saith the Lord God: In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it."[3] "I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God."[4] "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits), that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungod-

[1] Micah iv. 11—13. [2] Isaiah xlix 22.
[3] Ezekiel xxxvi. 33—36. [4] Amos ix. 14, 15.

liness from Jacob: For this is My covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins."[1] "Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."[2] "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel."[3] The "fall" has taken place; the "rising again" is yet to come.

There is no obscurity in these passages; they are to the point, and are sufficiently expressive. See also the whole of Jeremiah xxxi., which is a continuous prophecy relative to the future of this nation, the 15th verse of which being applied by Matthew to the time of the Messiah's advent,[4] shows that the predictions immediately following in reference to there being "hope in their end," and that they should "come again to their own border," may justly be taken to apply to a period subsequent to the dispersion which immediately followed the crucifixion of Christ, and the destruction of Jerusalem. Their turning "again to their cities" after the "lamentation and weeping" applied by the Evangelist to the time of the Messiah, must hence be taken to refer to a period that is yet to come in the history of the Jewish people, and to which the Apostle Paul also refers in the verses just quoted. That the predictions relative to the restoration of the Jews to their own land are to be understood literally there can be no reasonable doubt. It should be regarded as surely so as that they stand in connection with the predictions which relate to their actual dispersion among the nations, and which have since been literally fulfilled.

Speaking of the Jews under the Old Testament dispensation, in which he might have recognised the orderings of a

[1] Romans xi. 25—27. [2] 2 Cor. iii. 15, 16.
[3] Luke ii. 34. [4] Matt. ii. 17, 18.

Divine Providence preparing the way for the future fulfilment of the predictions of His prophets, M. Renan says: "They were a living protest against superstition and religious materialism. An extraordinary movement of ideas, ending in the most opposite results, made of them at this epoch, the most striking and original people in the world. Their dispersion along all the coasts of the Mediterranean, and the use of the Greek language, which they adopted when out of Palestine, prepared the way for a propagandism, of which ancient societies, divided into small nationalities, had never offered a single example. Profound pity for the Pagans, however brilliant might be their worldly fortune, was henceforth the feeling of every Jew. Israel became truly and specially the people of God, while around it the Pagan religions were more and more reduced, in Persia and Babylonia to an official charlatanism, in Egypt and Syria to a gross idolatry, and in the Greek and Roman world to mere parade." On the same subject as connected with the *Law* given by Moses, which he supposes to have been "the work of men penetrated with a high ideal of the present life, and believing that they had found the best means of realising it," he says:—"The work at which this people labours is a kingdom of God, not a civil republic; a universal institution, not a nationality or a country. The idea of a sovereign religion, the idea that there was something in the world superior to country, to blood, to laws—the idea which makes apostles and martyrs—was founded." Does M. Renan really think that this "idea" was innate in the Jewish mind as distinguished from the people of every other country and nation? In view of the universal corruption of human nature, and of the moral ignorance and depravity of the nations around them, is there nothing in this moral

and religious superiority found among the Jews, indicative of "the finger" of God as supernaturally manifested among them through His chosen instruments, the prophets? Renan fails to recognise it; but further observes: "Notwithstanding numerous failures, Israel admirably sustained this vocation. All Indo-European antiquity had placed Paradise in the beginning; all its poets had wept a vanished golden age. Israel placed the age of Gold in the future. The perennial poesy of religious souls, the Psalms, blossomed from this exalted piety, with their divine and melancholy harmony. The idea that Israel was a holy people, a tribe chosen by God and bound to Him by covenant, took deeper and firmer root. An immense expectation filled their souls."[1] And had they not the best of reasons for considering themselves such a people, and for entertaining such expectations, in view of the miracles performed to effect their deliverance from Egyptian bondage; of those also which attended them in their journey through the wilderness, their entrance into the promised land, and even after their settlement in it; together with the numerous promises and predictions (many of which had been already fulfilled) which they had received from God respecting their future as a nation, and the great "Deliverer" that was to arise, exercise regal dominion, and to whose "kingdom" there was to be "no end"? They had every reason, I should say, not only to believe but to know that they were "chosen by God and bound to Him by covenant."

Referring to a "very early" period of the Mosaic economy, Renan says: "Mystical utterances already made themselves heard, tending to exalt the martyrdom and celebrate the power of the 'Man of sorrows.' Respecting one of those sublime sufferers, who, like Jeremiah, stained the

[1] Pages 41, 42.

streets of Jerusalem with their blood, one of the inspired wrote a song upon the sufferings and triumph of the 'Servant of God,' in which all the prophetic force of the genius of Israel seemed concentrated.[1] 'He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep are gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. . . He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of My people was He stricken. And He made His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death,'" etc. See the whole of Isa. liii. Not very "mystical" these utterances, Renan, when compared with subsequent events. He whose soul, Isaiah says, was made "an offering for sin," and Whom John the Baptist styles "the Lamb [the sacrificial Lamb] of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and who, according to St. Paul, "gave Himself for our sins," was truly a Man of sorrows, despised and rejected of men, brought as a lamb to the slaughter, poured out His soul unto death, and being numbered as a criminal with the transgressors, by His suffering death as the penalty of the wicked, He was truly said to have made His grave with the wicked, as well as with the rich in His death—the tomb wherein He was laid being the property of a rich man.

A remarkable *dream* truly, as Renan elsewhere puts it,

[1] Page 39.

this "dream" of Isaiah's; and no less so the very literal fulfilment of it! But after this dreamer had dreamt his last dream, and all the others preceding had slept their last sleep, Renan says: "The first apocalypse, the Book of Daniel, appeared, and it was like a revival of prophecy, but under a very different form from the ancient one, and with a much larger idea of the destinies of the world. The Book of Daniel gave, in a manner, the last expression of the Messianic hopes." And referring to the time when these "hopes" were about to be realized, he says: "In Judea, expectation was at its height. Holy persons passed their life about the temple fasting, and praying, that it might please God not to take them from the world without having seen the fulfilment of the hopes of Israel. They felt a powerful presentiment; they were sensible of the approach of something unknown." And then he adds: "This confused mixture of clear views and dreams, these ceaseless aspirations, found at last their interpretation in the incomparable Man to whom the universal conscience has decreed the title, Son of God, and that with justice."[1] If "the universal conscience" has decreed that the title, "Son of God," justly belongs to Christ, we may here remark, it is solely because it was first decreed by Him who spoke from heaven and said, "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him" And if the "expectation, ceaseless aspirations, and powerful presentiment" of the Jewish people in reference to the coming Messiah, "found at last their interpretation in the incomparable Man" Christ Jesus, it is because God Himself bore witness to the fact that He was indeed the Messiah, by supernatural manifestations at the time of His advent to our world; because, subsequently, Jesus Himself claimed to be

[1] Pp. 43, 45.

the Messiah, and confirmed His claim by the unquestionable performance of many miracles; and because, also, that in Him all the prophecies relating to the Messiah were found to have been literally fulfilled.

CHAPTER XI.

PROPHECY.

THE character which M. Renan ascribes to our Lord in assuming that He artfully applied to Himself certain prophetic and Messianic references, and allowed Himself to be addressed by a prophetic title of royalty which He knew did not rightfully belong to Him—however apparently tempered by the mild phrases and accommodating conscience of His apologist—is really that of *an impostor*. And as in His conversation with the woman of Samaria Jesus positively declared Himself to be the Messiah,[1] He is, according to the graceless teaching of this discriminating gentleman, hereby convicted of a direct and most palpable falsehood. But a moment's reflection should have served to convince him that an impostor, or one falsely pretending to the character of the Messiah, in order to insure his success, would have certainly used means conformable with the views which the Jews entertained of a temporal prince and deliverer, as all Messianic impostors among them have done. But instead of conforming to these ambitious and mistaken notions of the Jews, Jesus, by announcing that His kingdom was spiritual and not of this world—thereby repudiating the idea of His being in the character of the Messiah a temporal sovereign—used such means as even the most undiscerning might see were directly calculated to frustrate His object, had His design

[1] John iv. 25.

been to sustain the character of an imposer upon the credulity of the nation, with a view to His being accepted as their spiritual prince and ruler and an authoritative teacher of righteousness and spiritual truth to the nation. Viewing it from a human standpoint, such a prudential, temporising policy, in view of the known Jewish prejudices and expectation as to the coming Messiah, every one must see would have been absolutely indispensable in order to His being able to entertain even the smallest hope of being generally accepted by the Jews. Jesus did not pursue this course, and therefore His was not mere human policy, and imposture is out of the question. He voluntarily placed Himself into direct collision with Jewish bigotry, prejudice, and earthly ambition, and succeeded—succeeded in establishing His character as the true Messiah, who, while rejected by the Jews as a nation, in this very circumstance fulfilled the predictions of their prophets, and accomplished the merciful intention of God in redeeming Jew and Gentile alike from the curse of a broken law according to the only plan which, in consistency with justice, even the infinitely wise God Himself could devise. The majesty of the Divine government is hereby sustained and the law of God vindicated; justice is satisfied, mercy to the sinner is proclaimed, and man, fallen, guilty man, may be saved. Such is the Divine end of the glorious dispensation which, according to prophetic teaching, it was Christ's mission to introduce into our world, adorn by His life, confirm by His miracles, and seal with that blood of the New Testament which His own lips declared "was shed for us."

One Person and one purpose comprehended the one prominent and distinguishing feature of the prophetic economy—Christ and the salvation of the world through His

expiatory sufferings and death. And in conformity with this end, as predicted by the patriarch Jacob, unto the Messiah, the royal Shiloh or Peacemaker, in connection with whose advent into the world was proclaimed "peace on earth, good will to men," has "the gathering of the people," God's true Israel, ever been. But "the royal diadem" with which they would "crown the Lord of all" M. Renan would take from His royal brow, and place thereon—a crown, it is true, but one of infidel construction, wanting the distinguishing diadem of Divinity, and even shorn of the star which points to the royal house of Bethlehem.

Monsieur Renan disputes that Jesus has a lawful right to the prophetic title, "Son of David." "Jesus was not of the family of David," he says. And again: "It is only by a rather embarrassed and roundabout way that, in the legends respecting Him, He is made to be born in Bethlehem. The motive for this supposition was the necessary consequence of the Messianic character attributed to Jesus."[1] Bold assertions, Renan, truly, but where is the proof? As usual, it is wholly wanting. Wonder that the heathen philosopher Celsus, who figured in the second century, and wrote a book against Christianity, knew nothing of this. He refers to the grand facts and doctrines of the Gospel, as preached by the Apostles, and contained in their writings, and has nearly eighty quotations from the books of the New Testament, which he not only appeals to as existing, but as universally received by the Christians of that age as credible and Divine. He also gives it as a reproach that the Bethlehemite was born in an insignificant Judean village.[2] Now this man, although a bitter enemy to Christianity, and most minute in his references to the circumstances of the life of Christ and His Apostles, thus showing

[1] Pages 147, 148. [2] See Dr. Lardner and Origen.

that he was well acquainted with them, and a philosopher withal, living close upon the days of the Apostles, nevertheless had to leave it for a brother philosopher (of superior intellect, of course) in the 19th century to discover the fraud in reference to the royal descent of Jesus, and to the place of His birth, which the sacred writers had, according to M. Renan, hypocritically, and with deep design, palmed upon the world in the name of truth! Rather remarkable, indeed; but how came it to pass that Justin (also of the second century, and who refers to Bethlehem as the place of Christ's birth), and all the Fathers of antiquity, failed to discover the fraud, and were equally deceived in the matter with Celsus and other enemies of the Church? Perhaps M. Renan would have us believe that they were all privy to the fraud, but thought it expedient to perpetuate it. To this idea, however, Justin's appeal to the Roman archives, or public records, is a sufficient reply. In the year 140, Justin Martyr referred the Emperor and the whole Roman Senate to the date of Christ's birth in these terms:—"There is a certain village in the land of Judea, distant thirty-five stadia from Jerusalem, in which Christ Jesus was born, as ye can learn from the enrolments completed under Cyrenius, your first Procurator in Judea." So also Tertullian, who, in the year 200, wrote as follows:—"Finally, concerning the census or enrolment of Augustus, *which the Roman archives preserve* as a faithful witness of the Lord's nativity." And St. Chrysostom, writing in the year 385, expressly refers to those archives as containing a record of the enrolment alluded to by St. Luke, as designating the time of our Lord's nativity, and as being the occasion of His birth at Bethlehem.

As to its being a fraud, then, and to which the Fathers

who lived nearest the time of the nativity were privy, it is altogether out of the question, since, as we have seen, the Roman archives containing the record of the time and place of Christ's birth existed in their day, and in testimony whereof were appealed to by them. But irrespective of this irrefutable historic fact, what can Renan make of "the dream of an unknown descendant of the ancient kings," and "the universal Jewish belief" on this subject, of which he speaks? "From the close of the Asmonean dynasty," he says, "the dream of an unknown descendant of the ancient kings, who should avenge the nation of its enemies, filled every mind. The universal belief was, that the Messiah would be the son of David, and like him would be born at Bethlehem."[1] Very true, but how are we to account for such universal belief if, as Renan asserts, "the family of David had been long extinct?" Renan's position is absurd upon the very face of it. Public opinion in reference to His being born in Bethlehem, and to His being the son of David, had data, we may suppose, from which such opinion was formed; and data, too, every particular of which was at the time of the Messiah's advent susceptible of the most perfect and unmistakable verification. The prophecies delivered to this people relative to their past history—an historical record of which they possessed in their sacred writings—had hitherto all been fulfilled in their history to the letter, thus proving to them, with the force of a demonstration, that their prophets were Divinely inspired. And on prophecy it was—delivered by God's true servants, and which had never in a single instance been falsified—that they based their belief in reference to the coming Messiah. And that the prophecies on which they justly based their expectation of the Messiah, were exactly fulfilled by the

[1] Page 178.

events connected with the advent of Jesus, we have the united testimony of those holy men, the Evangelists, to prove. In addition to the genealogy of Christ given by Matthew, this Evangelist asserts that "He was born in Bethlehem, of Judea"—that the chief priests and scribes, at the demand of Herod, declared that He should be born "in Bethlehem of Judea, for thus," they said, "it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel"—that wise men from the East went to Bethlehem, and found "the young child" there—that Herod, seeking to destroy the young child, "sent forth and slew all tha children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under;" and that this circumstance, as well as the place of His birth, was also the subject of prophecy.[1] Now this is all very circumstantial, and indicates a perfect knowledge of all the facts of the case, a wilful perversion of which could easily have been detected and exposed at the time Matthew's Gospel was written. But even the enemies of Christ acquiesced in the truth of the facts, inasmuch as there is not a single surmise against them to be found in any of the works of the first opposers of Christianity.

Luke, too, is very explicit, and gives it as the testimony of the Holy Ghost, by Zacharias, that the Lord "hath raised up a horn of salvation for us *in the house of His servant David*," which of itself, in connection with Gabriel's message to the virgin previous to her marriage,[2] proves that Mary, no less than Joseph, was of the tribe of Judah, and family of David—that "the angel of the Lord" subsequently appeared to the shepherds in the field, and said to

[1] Matthew ii. 4—17. [2] Luke i. 32, 69.

them, "Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day *in the City of David*, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord"—that the shepherds "*went to Bethlehem* and found Mary, and Joseph, with the babe lying in a manger"—and that in reference to the "round-about way," as Renan calls it, by which the providence of God so ordered things that the predictions of His servants as to the place of Christ's birth should be literally fulfilled, a decree having gone out from Cæsar Augustus for the levying of a tax, "Joseph went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called *Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David*, to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife;" and thus, in a manner as simple as it was striking, did God make good the declarations spoken by the mouth of His servants in reference to the advent of the Messiah, and the place of His birth.

But how could all this be true, if, as Renan says, "The family of David had, as it seems, been long extinct"?[1]—in proof of which, although he gives no historic references, he makes another characteristic assertion, which he perhaps thinks will answer quite as well. Here it is: "Neither Herod nor the Romans dreamt for a moment that any representative whatever of the ancient dynasty existed in their midst."[2] We have seen, however, that Herod did "dream" of it, and that the dream led to very serious results. The evidence arising from his own admission in a note at the bottom of page 178 is also against his baseless assertion in reference to the extinction of the family of David: "It is true," he says, "that certain doctors—such as Hillel, Gamaliel—are mentioned as being of the

[1] Page 178. [2] Page 178.

race of David." And then, without giving any ground of reason, he adds: "But these are very doubtful allegations." But besides this admission, together with the indisputable testimony of the evangelists relative to the actual events, is it reasonable to suppose that "the universal belief" in reference to Christ's coming of the seed of David, would continue to remain with the Jews of all classes down to the period to which Renan refers as "long" after it had become well-known among them (and who should know it if they did not?) "that the family of David had become extinct?" Absurd in the extreme! The line of descent was still traceable to living members of it, and Jesus was in the line, the silly and even blasphemous assertion of M. Renan in reference to His having allowed a title to be given Him, without which He could not hope for success"[1] being refuted by the known character of Jesus, as well as by the testimony of all history. Even to this day God's eye may be upon living members of the family of David; for "Thus saith the Lord: If my covenant is not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham," &c.[2]

"To the Jews holding the ordinary faith," continues Renan, "and to the readers of Isaiah and Micah, He was the Son of David;" but as to Himself, he says, He did not claim to be the Son of David—"Never does He designate Himself as Son of David."[3] Well, all that need be said to that is, that others claimed it for Him; that He certainly did not disclaim it, which of itself, considering His character, is proof that He had a right to it; that hence, when accosted with the title "Jesus, Thou Son of David,"

[1] Page 178. [2] Page 178. [3] Page 179.

and when riding into Jerusalem amid the shouts of "Hosanna to the Son of David," not only did no one question His legal right to the title, but His silent recognition of the fact on those occasions most effectually confirmed His right to it; and in the Revelation we read of Him saying by the mouth of His servant, "I am the root and the offspring of David."[1] This is enough. But let the reader note well that in all M. Renan has said on this subject, as usual, he has not advanced one word from either friend or foe, history sacred or profane, in proof of his position. The only historical evidence he has advanced bearing upon the subject at all, he has gathered from profane history, and which goes to show that Gamaliel and others were at the period referred to, living members of the royal line of King David; and from this, in conjunction with the evidence of Christ's royal descent afforded by the Evangelists, he appears to have drawn the very intelligent conclusion that the family of David must have been "extinct!"

In describing the "kingdom of God," which Renan says, "appears to have been understood by Jesus in very different senses," he remarks: "At times the kingdom of God is the literal accomplishment of the apocalyptic visions of Daniel. At other times, the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, and the approaching deliverance is a deliverance of the Spirit. In this last sense, the revolution desired by Jesus was the one which has really taken place: the establishment of a new worship, purer than that of Moses. If He had been only an enthusiast, led away by the apocalypses on which the popular imagination fed, he would have remained an obscure sectary, inferior to those whose ideas he followed. . . . The two parts of his system, or,

[1] Rev. xxii. 16.

rather, his two conceptions of the kingdom of God, rest one on the other, and this mutual support has been the cause of its incomparable success." If this be the case, if the union of the "two conceptions" was so indispensable to success, and one of them has "really taken place," why deny that the other—the "apocalyptic visions," as he terms the prophecies of Daniel—has taken, is taking, and will yet take place, according to its distinctive features? Here, as elsewhere, M. Renan but confirms the fact that inconsistency and infidelity go hand in hand, and are inseparable. But while this gentleman is pleased to thus identify himself with those who fulfil the prediction of the prophet, "Seeing they shall see, but shall not perceive," the candid reader will doubtless see in the palpable agreement between the predictions of Scripture and the corresponding events, indubitable marks of the prescience and inspiration of God.

We will here give the reader a specimen of M. Renan's ability to misconstrue, or, rather, misrepresent and falsify Scripture statement when referring to passages involving the doctrine of prophecy. After making the perfectly gratuitous and unfounded assertion, that "many anecdotes were conceived to prove that in Him [Jesus] the prophecies regarded as Messianic had had their accomplishment," he refers his readers to John xix. 23, 24, as an example of the evangelists' style of reasoning on the subject, remarking upon the passage as follows: "Sometimes they reasoned thus: 'Such a thing has happened to Jesus; now Jesus is the Messiah; therefore such a thing was to happen to the Messiah.'" Now, if the reader will refer to the passage, he will observe that the reasoning of John is entirely different from that ascribed to him by M. Renan. The evangelist does not say, as Renan puts it, that such a thing was to happen to

the Messiah because it had happened to Jesus; but simply that such a thing had happened to Jesus, the Messiah, *because it was before predicted* in the Scripture that it should happen to Him. "That the Scriptures might be fulfilled," John says, "these things therefore the soldiers did;" that is, did to Him in Whom these predictions found their fulfilment, and Who had also by His words and His works previously proved Himself to be the true Messiah.

But the story of Christ as connected with the fulfilment of prophecy, Renan insists is a fabrication—is "legend." It is legend, then, we may remark, of very ancient origin, and having very remarkable corroborative testimony; but this is, of course, all nothing to him. Strange, however, that it did not strike him as something more than remarkable that legend should be sustained for so lengthened a period, and by testimony, both prophetic and historical, the best and most reliable that history can furnish. Referred to by Moses in the prediction, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent—which prediction is still in course of fulfilment in the unceasing conflict between light and darkness, good and evil, the dominion of Satan and the kingdom of Christ; a contest which is destined to continue until the head of the serpent shall have been completely bruised, his usurped authority destroyed, and "the kingdoms of this world," which are now being rapidly enlightened and Christianized, have become "the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ—prophesied of by Isaiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel"—reiterated circumstantially and in a variety of forms by all the leading Jewish prophets—appealed to by Jesus Himself, and claimed by Him as having a direct and special reference to His Person, work,

and mission—confirmed by the declaration of the evangelists, that the events as predicted had actually and literally transpired—and lastly, further borne witness to by the writings of other inspired Apostles, who confirmed the truthfulness of their testimony by the performance of the most astounding miracles, and by finally sacrificing their lives in defence of the truth they had espoused. Such a concurrence of reliable testimony is not to be found in support of "legend" throughout the historic annals of any civilized people in the world. But the confirmatory testimony of miracle, and of prophecy fulfilled, in connection with the historic as faithfully delineated by *such* men, prove the events narrated to have been fact and not fiction, God's truth, and not legend, vain man to the contrary notwithstanding.

We will now briefly notice the manner in which M. Renan disposes of one of our Lord's predictions. Assuming that prophecy to be genuine must originate with the Deity, at the same time denying that the Deity has ever thus communicated with men, he appears to be considerably stumbled at our Lord's prediction relative to the siege of Jerusalem, or to utterances having a direct reference thereto. But rather than candidly admit the prophecy on the authority of well-authenticated history, he prefers to play the part of the disingenuous quibbler, with a view, if possible, to weaken its prophetic character, and thereby weaken men's faith in what he denounces as an unphilosophical dogma of Scripture. There is no argument with him, no attempted proof in reference to the point whatever, but simply bare assertion that such and such ideas "could not have been conceived until after the siege," etc., weakly insinuating thereby, that because prophecy is not to be

found as an article of his creed, his readers must, of course, take his bare word for it that anything found in the Scriptures which gives the slightest colouring to it, must, as a matter of course, be regarded as a "fraud," notwithstanding the overwhelming testimony of sacred history to the contrary; for such testimony, however abundant and convincing, we are given to understand, is to be regarded as of no weight when placed in competition with a cherished whim of M. Renan's.

His remarks on this point are these: "The speech to the women of Jerusalem (Luke xxiii. 28, 29) could scarcely have been conceived except after the siege of the year 70."[1] Again he says: "The words which are there attributed to Jesus could only have been written after the siege of Jerusalem. The circumstance is one of those in which we are sensible of the work of a pious and loving imagination."[2] A very "pious" imagination truly that could fabricate and palm upon the world a lie in the name of Jesus. But perhaps not only the exhortation, "Weep for yourselves and for your children," for the desolations that are coming upon you, but the narration of the prediction, "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down;"[3] "For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground;" also: "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. . . . For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. . . . And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the

[1] Page 24—note. [2] Page 286. [3] Mark xiii. 2.

Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;"[1]—perhaps these predictions of our Lord, uttered upwards of forty years before the events occurred, and all of which have been most circumstantially fulfilled in the experience of the Jewish nation, *also* appeared upon the sacred page as the result of "a pious and loving imagination." But perhaps not, Monsieur Renan.

We must give the gentleman credit, however, in referring to this subject, for the following admission, although, in the judgment of the candid reader, it will doubtless add little to either his moral or intellectual reputation: "There is no doubt, however," he says, "that Jesus predicted that great terrors would precede His re-appearance. These terrors were an integral part of all the Jewish apocalypses." Now, apart from the consideration that, according to Renan's own theory of apocalypses, he herein accuses Jesus of being an apocalyptic visionary, it is certainly something to the Evangelists to have credit from such a philosopher for not being false in every particular of their professedly faithful narrations! But is it quite reasonable, we might be permitted to ask, to admit that the Evangelists are true to the original in their relation of one part, and false in their relation of the other part of the same prediction? And this, too, in opposition to the strongest possible evidence that they were holy, God-fearing men, who, consequently, loved God's law, and regarded, as they taught, that "the lying lip is an abomination to the Lord."

Again: on page 22, we read that Luke *wrote his Gospel* "certainly after the siege of Jerusalem," and in proof he gives not a single word, but simply refers his readers to the circumstance of our Lord's prediction of the siege as recorded by Luke. This, which is rather an interesting

[1] Luke xix. 43; xxi. 20–24.

mode of proving a proposition, and which is M. Renan's characteristic style of reasoning throughout his work, it will be seen is really no proof at all—scarcely even the semblance of it. Expressed syllogistically, his reasoning would read thus:—First, his argument in reference to the truth of prophecy: "Prophecy involves the supernatural; now I do not believe in the supernatural; therefore, prophecy must be false!" Second, "Luke has recorded a prediction of the siege of Jerusalem which exactly accords with the events as they transpired; now I do not believe that future events can thus be foretold; therefore, the account of them was written after the siege. And Luke is also hereby convicted of falsehood in ascribing the prediction to Jesus." The reader will perceive that the whole argument is thus most absurdly made to turn on Renan's "I do not," or "I will not believe." It is to no purpose that he is overwhelmed with the weight of the most reliable of historic evidence, the law of his mind is, "I will not believe."

In a note on page 188, M. Renan further writes: "It must be remarked that the picture of the end of time attributed to Jesus by the synoptics, contains many features which relate to the siege of Jerusalem." And then, he again adds, with no other reference than the chapter containing the prediction referred to: "Luke wrote sometime after the siege." If, however, the prediction in question were a fabrication recorded after the event predicted had taken place, how comes it to pass, as Renan here admits, that the general judgment and that of the Jewish nation are coupled and blended together by a cluster of images in one connected discourse?—one manifest object of which being that one event is to be regarded as typical of the other. Had it been the work of man, written after the destruction of Jerusalem,

the final judgment of the world would certainly not have been thus associated with it. Had there been imposture or false pretension on the part of the Evangelists, nothing is clearer than that the two events would have been kept quite distinct, that the fulfilment of the pretended prediction relative to the event that had already transpired, might be all the more apparent to the world.

It so happens, moreover, that we have historic testimony affording strong presumptive evidence against the assertion of M. Renan, in reference to Luke's Gospel having been written after the siege of Jerusalem. Acts i. 1, proves that Luke's Gospel was written before the Acts of the Apostles; and this treatise ends with Paul's imprisonment at Rome, which, as a critic in the *North British Review* has remarked, no writer places later than A.D. 65. It is, therefore, exceedingly probable that the writing of this book was completed during the "two whole years" of Luke's residence with Paul at Rome, ending with this date; and if so, his Gospel having certainly been written before it, since the destruction of Jerusalem occurred in the year 70, our Lord's prediction in reference to it must have been recorded by Luke in his Gospel before its fulfilment, by at least five years in addition to the time that must have elapsed between its entry in the first and the completion of the last treatise. And the Gospels by Matthew and Mark, which also contain the prediction, Renan himself admits, were written some time before Luke's Gospel.

But suppose it were otherwise, suppose it could be positively proved that Luke did write his Gospel after the siege, this would not affect in the least the veracity of the Evangelist, nor the truthfulness of the prediction he recorded. Luke and the other Evangelists give it as a fact that Christ

uttered the prediction when He was with them in the flesh; and as a fact must ever remain a fact whether it be ever recorded in a book, or not, the whole of the argument turns on the veracity of the men. It is not—prove that the book was written after the siege, and you thereby prove that the prediction was false; but thus: Prove that the men were lying, hypocritical impostors, and you thereby prove that the truthfulness of their testimony is open to question. This no man ever did, or ever can do; but the opposite by a variety of evidence, even God's enemies being judges, has been clearly established. They were the most holy and self-denying of men: men who for the sake of Christ and the world nobly persevered in the proclamation of the truth in the face of the direst ignominy and persecution, and knowing, too, that they were destined to seal the truth of their testimony with their blood; which they accordingly did, fulfilling thereby another prediction of our Lord's: "They shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them.[1] And some of you shall they cause to be put to death."[2]

"The terrible doctrine of the substitution of the Gentiles," says M. Renan,—"the idea that the kingdom of God was about to be transferred to others, because those for whom it was destined would not receive it, is used as a fearful menace against the aristocracy."[3] These "words of Jesus,"[4] then, Renan will at least admit, have not been "convicted of falsehood." His prescience and penetration are confessedly without fault here; for His assertions in reference to the Gospel salvation being offered to the Gentiles, and to their acceptance of it, have, Renan himself being judge, been most signally fulfilled.

[1] Mark xiii. 9. [2] Luke xxi. 16. [3] Page 246. [4] Matt. xxi. 43.

In the very vain and abortive efforts of M. Renan to strip from our Lord the prophetic character which attaches to Him, he is thus beset with difficulties on every hand. There were also other prophecies given by our Lord, besides those to which we have just referred, which, had we noticed them, might have occasioned him quite as much embarrassment as the one relative to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem—the prediction in reference to Himself, for instance, as recorded in Matthew xx. 18, 19: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him: and the third day He shall rise again." The prediction is here very circumstantial, and the events corresponded with it in every particular. But here, again, we might expect to be met with his specious argument, "It is a fraud"—his usual method of disposing of all historical testimony that does not subserve his purpose in the attempted establishment of his infidel creed. His favourite principles of historical criticism are thus brought into very frequent requisition, because they stand him in admirable stead of reasonable argument. Defeated by equal numbers in open manly engagement, and retreating for shelter to this imagined stronghold, which he had taken the precaution to make ready before he could dare to venture an attack upon the Holy One and the Just—weak and baseless subterfuge though it be, it doubtless answers well his purpose in serving him as a retreat in every emergency.

But with a man of this description, it is difficult indeed to deal; because all argument, however rational and conclusive, is instantly set aside by the one ever-recurring ob-

jection, "It is a fraud; I will not believe." Well, whether such men will or will not believe, Christ's further prediction will still hold good—"He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

CHAPTER XII.

PROPHECY.

THE prophecies of Holy Scripture are *generally* of so marked and distinct a character as to be clearly inapplicable to any other than the times, persons, and places to which they are uniformly applied by the Christian world. But while this fact must be acknowledged by all who have sufficiently studied the subject—and while, also, *all* the prophecies, both Jewish and Christian, carry with them intrinsic and evident marks as to their validity and holy origin, it is not in every case equally easy to determine what is the exact subject of a particular prophecy, or precisely what the prophet speaks of, and what the characters or events which may with certainty be applied to it in conformity with its terms and true bearing or design. And that some of the prophecies of Scripture, therefore, from such comparative obscurity, as well as, in some instances, from the eccentricities of interpreters, have been misinterpreted and misapplied, is no more than might have been reasonably expected. Obscurity, and singularity or absurdity of interpretation, however, are not confined to the subject of prophecy. They are found in connection with every branch of literature and science, and, more or less, with every subject that engages our attention.

A certain degree of obscurity in some instances, doubtless arises from what is called the *double sense* of prophecy—as,

e.g., prophecies which refer in their primary sense to events of the Old Testament, and have a manifest prophetic and typical relation to events of the New. Or, where they are expressed in terms which may be understood either in a literal or a figurative sense, as in Isa. xxv. 5, where the terms of the prophecy may be interpreted to represent either the spiritual healing of the soul, or literally, to express the healing of the body—either the one or the other, or both. The latter, no doubt, in this case, as it, doubtless, refers both to the spiritual liberty, enjoyments, and blessedness of those who were to become the subjects of the Messiah's kingdom, and also to the miracles of healing which were to be performed by Christ and His Apostles. Referring to the time of our Lord's advent, the prophet says: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." Or, as already remarked, a certain degree of obscurity may be judged to arise from passages where the event predicted is combined with and made to prefigure another which was to be fulfilled at a subsequent period—as, for example, where Christ couples in one prediction the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish polity with the end and general judgment of the world.[1] In this twofold prediction, as it may be called, comprising as it does two separate events, the language and images relating to each are applicable to the other in a typical relation The prediction seems to have been purposely framed so as to include the destruction of Jerusalem, and the coming of Christ "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" to judge the world; the accomplishment of the former being designed as a pledge and an assurance that the latter judgment;

[1] Matt. xxiv.

which is of a more universal character, will also in its time be literally fulfilled.

But Scripture prophecy, it should be observed, has nothing in this respect in common with the "*oracles*," so called, of ancient heathen nations; for while the leading feature of the latter is manifest equivocation, there is nothing of this nature observable in the former. The double sense in which certain Scripture prophecies may be viewed evidently arises, as we have seen, from their being so constructed by an all-seeing Power as to include both events in a typical relation; whereas the heathen oracles, being counterfeit or a parody of the Divine oracles, were so framed as to include two or more events which were diametrically opposite to each other, insomuch that if the event predicted happened according to one interpretation of the wording of the prediction, it could not possibly happen according to any other. And as it was known at the time the *oracle* was given that the event predicted must happen in one or another of the forms artfully couched under the wording of the oracle, they were thus enabled to maintain their reputation as heathen seers or predicters; for no sooner did the event happen, whether A shot B, or B shot A, than they claimed it as a fulfilment of their prophecy.

By way of illustration, allow a quotation from the *American Religious Encyclopædia:* "Most of the pagan deities had their appropriate oracles. Apollo had the greatest number. . . . The responses of oracles were delivered in a variety of ways: at Delphi, they interpreted and put into verse what the priestess pronounced in the time of her furor. Mr. Bayle observes that at first this oracle gave its answers in verse; and that it fell at length to prose, upon people's beginning to laugh at the poorness of its versification. The

Epicureans made this the subject of their jests, and said, in raillery, it was surprising enough that Apollo, the god of poetry, should be a much worse poet than Homer, whom he himself had inspired. By the railleries of these philosophers, and particularly by the Cynics and Peripatetics, the priests were at length obliged to desist from the practice of versifying the responses of the Pythia, which, according to Plutarch, was one of the principal causes of the declension of the oracle of Delphos.

"The ambiguity of the oracles in their responses, and their double meaning, contributed to their support. Ablancourt observes that the study or research of the meaning of oracles was but a fruitless thing; and that they were never understood till after their accomplishment. Historians relate that Crœsus was tricked by the ambiguity and equivocation of the oracle. That delivered to Pyrrhus, which is comprised in this Latin verse—

'Credo equidem Alacidas Romanos vincere posse,'

had the same advantage; for, according to the rules of syntax, either of the two accusatives may be governed by the verb, and the verse be explained, either by saying the Romans shall conquer the Æacidæ, of whom Pyrrhus was descended, or those shall conquer the Romans. When Alexander fell sick at Babylon, some of his courtiers who happened to be in Egypt, or who went thither on purpose, passed the night in the temple of Serapis, to enquire if it would not be proper to bring Alexander to be cured by him. The god answered, it was better that Alexander should remain where he was. This in all events was a very prudent and safe answer. If the king recovered his health, what glory must Serapis have gained by saving him the fatigue of his journey! If he died, it was but saying he died in a

favourable juncture after so many conquests ; which, had he lived, he could neither have enlarged nor preserved. This is actually the construction they put upon the response ; whereas had Alexander undertaken the journey, and died in the temple, or by the way, nothing could have been said in favour of Serapis. When Trajan had formed the design of his expedition against the Parthians, he was advised to consult the oracle of Heliopolis, to which he had no more to do but send a note under a seal. That prince, who had no great faith in oracles, sent thither a blank note; and they returned him another of the same kind. By this Trajan was convinced of the divinity of the oracle ! He sent back a second note to the god, in which he enquired whether he should return to Rome after finishing the war he had in view. The god, as Macrobius tells the story, ordered a vine, which was among the offerings of the temple, to be divided into pieces and brought to Trajan. The event justified the oracle ; for the Emperor dying in that war, his bones were carried to Rome, which had been represented by that broken vine. As the priests of that oracle knew Trajan's design, they happily devised that response, which, in all events, was capable of a favourable interpretation, whether he routed and cut the Parthians in pieces, or if his army met with the same fate. Sometimes the responses of the oracles were mere banter, as in the case of the man who wished to know by what means he might become rich, and who received for answer from the god, that he had only to make himself master of all that lay between Sicyon and Corinth.

" There are two points in dispute on the subject of oracles; namely, whether they were human, or diabolical machines; and whether or not they ceased upon the publication or

preaching of the Gospel. Most of the Fathers of the Church, it is said, supposed that the devil issued oracles. Vossus allows that it was Satan who spoke in oracles; but thinks that the obscurity of his answers was owing to his ignorance as to the precise circumstances of events. Father Balthus, a Jesuit, wrote a treatise in defence of the Fathers with regard to the origin of oracles; but without denying the imposture of the priests often blended with the oracles.

"Dr. Middleton, in his *Examination*, etc., thinks himself warranted to pronounce, from the authority of the best and wisest of the heathens themselves, and the evidence of plain facts, which are recorded of those oracles, as well as from the nature of the thing itself, that they were all mere imposture, wholly invented and supported by human craft, without any supernatural aid or interposition whatever. He alleges that Cicero, speaking of the Delphic oracle, the most revered of any in the heathen world, declares, that nothing was become more contemptible, not only in his days, but long before him; that Demosthenes, who lived about three hundred years earlier, affirmed of the same oracle, in a public speech to the people of Athens, that it was gained to the interests of King Philip, an enemy to that city; that the Greek historians tell us how, on several other occasions, it had been corrupted by money, to serve the views of particular persons and parties, and that the prophetess sometimes had been deposed for bribery and lewdness. Agreeably to all which Strabo tells us, that divination in general and oracles had been in high credit among the ancients, but in his days were treated with much contempt. Lastly, Eusebius also, the great historian of the primitive Church, declares, that there were six hundred writers among the heathens themselves who had publicly written against the reality of them.

"Plutarch alleges two reasons for the ceasing of oracles; the one was Apollo's chagrin; who, it seems, took it in dudgeon to be interrogated about so many trifles. The other was, the forlorn state of Greece, ruined and desolated by wars; for hence, the smallness of the gains let the priests sink into a poverty and contempt too bare to cover the fraud."

Such, then, was the character of the oracles of ancient heathen nations, and of the priests who lived by them. As compared with the holy Oracles and Prophets of the Divine Word, they were simply base and contemptible, and prove that, as distinguished from the Prophecies of Holy Scripture, they had their origin with the crafty and the wicked, and were therefore conducted under the guidance and leadership of the "wicked one." Having a totally different origin from genuine, holy prophecy, they were chiefly remarkable for their studied ambiguity and equivocation, invariably related to mere personal or comparatively unimportant events, and never ventured beyond a period closely verging upon the present. A sagacious conjecture based on an intimate knowledge of the existing state of things, in connection with their knowledge of the history of the past, might thus have served for the issuing of those oracles by which a cunning and idolatrous priestcraft, aided by artful equivocation, imposed upon the nations of antiquity.

Those who had the command of the oracular institutions, acquired, at one time, a great influence over the minds of the people, and thereby made it the source of immense wealth to themselves. No such mercenary motives, however, were found to actuate the Jewish prophets, nor one of the writers of holy Scripture. Their work was all unselfish, all disinterested, so far as this world's emoluments are

concerned. Subject to the following qualification, Renan has truly said that, "notwithstanding all their enormous defects, the Jewish people are the authors of the finest movement of disinterested enthusiasm which history records."[1] Not the "authors," Renan, but simply the channels through which the grace of a pure and disinterested religious "enthusiasm" has flowed. They were the chosen people of God, and their prophets were the chosen, holy instruments of delivering God's messages to His people and the world. From Moses to Malachi, extending through a period of more than a thousand years, they all united in delivering the same doctrines and predicting the same blessings to mankind. Their doctrine was holy, and with fearless confidence and sincerity, they invariably reproved and threatened the sinful however encircled by power or exalted in rank. Their zeal was disinterested, their courage undaunted, and their integrity was unimpeachable. Their Divine commission was attested by the intrinsic excellency of their doctrine, by the miraculous power which they occasionally exercised, and by the fulfilment, during their lives, of many minor predictions. What was said of Samuel, might with equal propriety and truth be said of each and all of God's prophets: "And he said unto him, Behold now there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honourable man; *all that he saith cometh surely to pass*."—1 Samuel ix. 6.

The excellency of their doctrine and teaching, together with the certain fulfilment at the appointed time of the predictions which they uttered, were to be the test by which the people of Israel were to distinguish the true from the false and idolatrous prophets that might, for the purpose of proving their love to God, be permitted to arise

[1] Page 65.

among them.[1] There was nothing thus intrinsically holy as to doctrine delivered in connection with the oracles of the heathen; on the contrary, their doctrines were wholly "earthly, sensual, devilish." And, *money* being at the root of this idolatrous, priestly institution, unlike the holy Urim and Thummim of the Jews (see 1 Sam. xxviii. 6), they were always ready to respond at the bidding or request of earthly sovereigns. By all unbiassed judges, precisely the same distinction will be made between the oracles of the heathen and those of the Jewish prophets, as King Nebuchadnezzar made between the magicians and astrologers, who, he said, "had prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before him, till the time be changed," and the prophet Daniel, whose God, he said, after hearing from his lips "the dream with the interpretation thereof," "is, of a truth a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing Thou couldst reveal this secret."[2] Again he says, speaking of another dream, "Forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but Thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee."[3] At the close of the same chapter it is added: "And at the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou? Now I, Nebuchadnezzar,

[1] Deu. xiii. 1-3; xviii. 22. Ezek. xxxiii. 30-33. [2] Dan. ii. 9, 47.
[3] Dan. iv. 18, 34-37.

praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase." These words have the right ring about them, Renan, and had you a truly spiritual ear, you could not fail to discern it.

To King Agrippa, Paul once said, "Believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." But his belief, unhappily, only led him to be "*almost* persuaded to be a Christian."[1] Renan appears at times to approach very near the line which separates belief from unbelief; but then again he suddenly starts back as if conscious that the force of truth had all but led him to take the abhorent step, and prove traitorous to his beloved philosophy and the unhallowed cause he has undertaken to defend. To the doctrine of prophecy, M. Renan, in the following passages, "almost" if not "altogether" commits himself. Referring his readers to "Isaiah lx., etc.," he says: "At the epoch of the captivity, a poet, full of harmony, saw the splendour of a future Jerusalem, of which the peoples and the distant isles should be tributaries, under colours so charming, that one might say a glimpse of the visions of Jesus had reached him at a distance of six centuries."[2] Again he says: "Jesus applied to Himself not without reason the passage from Isaiah: 'He shall not strive nor cry; a bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory. And in His name shall the Gentiles trust.'"[3] And on page 168, he says, admitting that the prophetical types of the Old Testament centered in Jesus according to the teaching of the New: "Jesus was the first who dared to say that from His time, or rather from that of John, the Law was abolished. The passage, Matthew v. 17, 18, is not in contradiction with those in which 'the

[1] Acts xxvi. 28. [2] Page 65. [3] Page 230.

abolition of the Law is implied. It only signifies that in Jesus all the types of the Old Testament are realized."[1]

And were they not all, we would ask, plainly typical of Him "Who was slain," in the purpose of God, "from the foundation of the world?" Will not M. Renan admit also, that it was not "without reason" that those "types" were claimed by Jesus and His Apostles to be "all realised in Him?" Will he not admit that the Jews, in view of what they certainly knew of the fulfilment of prophetic promise, were fully justified in looking forward through those expressive and significant "types" to a coming Messiah, as are also Christians, in their turn, in looking back through the Christian symbols of Baptism and the Eucharist to a Messiah crucified, and thenceforth risen, and, in His mediatorial office, glorified Intercessor on His people's behalf?

The dispensations of religion that God ordained to prepare the world for the appearance of the Messiah, consisted mainly of typical representations of Christ and the great redeeming work He undertook to accomplish. This redeeming work was done, and all previous dispensations of types and shadows were brought to a close when He exclaimed upon the Cross, "It is finished." The whole of the ceremonial Law of types and shadows, which came by Moses, was designed to teach man the necessity of a Saviour. "The law," says St. Paul, "was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ."[2] The sacrifices and offerings prefigured the atonement made by Him who "was once offered to bear the sins of many,"[3] "Who hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself,"[4] and who "by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."[5] The temporary rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic economy

[1] Page 168—note. [2] Gal. iii. 24. [3] Heb. ix. 28.
[4] Heb. ix. 26. [5] Heb. x. 14.

were, as the Apostle says, but "the shadow of good things to come"[1] to the world under the new and more perfect dispensation of the Church established by Him who "hath taken away the first that He may establish the second."[2]

The prophets chosen by God from among the people He had selected as the depositories of His revealed will to men, and from whom the Redeemer was to descend, prophesied of Him through a long line of succession; and they, with the priests, typified Him in His prophetic and priestly office. All the historical types of the Old Testament, from Adam, who was "the figure of Him that was to come,"[3] to the time when vision and prophecy ceased, are connected with the Person of Christ, who, the Apostle says, "hath broken down the middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile, and "abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."[4]

Abraham, having received the promise, that "in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed,"[5] by offering up, in obedience to God's command, his "only begotten" heir of the promises, whom, through faith, he received again from the dead "in a figure,"[6] thereby plainly typified the offering of God's only begotten Son who "died for our sins"—"the just for the unjust to bring us to God." Moses, too, as the leader, ruler, and prophet of God's ancient people, was a type of Christ[7] as the great Prophet,

[1] Heb. x. 1. [2] Heb. x. 9. [3] Romans v. 14. [4] Eph. ii. 14—18.
[5] Gen. xxii. 18; Gal. iii. 16. [6] Heb. xi. 19. [7] Acts vii. 37—38.

Leader, and Ruler of God's Spiritual Israel, delivering them from a bondage more oppressive than that of Egypt, and conducting them, as "the Captain of their Salvation," to the land of promise, the Canaan above.

The brazen serpent which Moses erected in the wilderness, we are also taught, is to be regarded as a type of Christ lifted up on the cross for the salvation of mankind, and to whom the eye of the world is directed to look, believingly look, and live.—John iii. 14. So also the *Passover*, we are given to understand by Christ and the New Testament writers, was instituted not only as a memorial of the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian servitude, but also as a type of that which was to be "fulfilled in the kingdom of God."[1] The "offering" of the Passover, or paschal lamb, as it was called, was to be a lamb *without blemish*,"[2] thus expressively typifying "the Lamb of God," who, in His sacrificial character, "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself *without spot* to God," and "redeemed us with His precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."[3] They were not to "break any bone of it;[4] thus prefiguring according to the evangelist John, that, contrary to the Roman custom with those whom they crucified, not a bone of Christ's was to be broken. It will thus be seen, that this paschal lamb most expressively prefigures the sacrifice of the spotless Lamb of God, "Christ our Passover,"[5] the appointed "propitiation for the sins of the world," and Deliverer of His people from the bondage of sin and misery. The blood sprinkled upon the door posts and lintel of every house, that the destroying angel, at the sight of it, might pass them over, may fitly represent the blood of Christ, called also "the blood of sprinkling,"

[1] Luke xxii. 15, 16; John xix. 36. [2] Ex. xii. 5.
[3] Heb. ix. 14; 1 Pet. i. 19. [4] Ex. xii. 46; Num. ix. 12. [5] 1 Cor. v. 7.

which when applied through faith to the heart and conscience of the believer, removes from him all danger of being cut down by the avenging sword of justice, which is represented as being continually suspended over the head of the impenitent guilty. And to complete the figure, the nourishment derived from the eating of the flesh of the Passover may fitly prefigure the eating of Christ's flesh[1]—"His body broken for us"—by faith, whereby His people get spiritual nourishment by which they are enabled to prosecute their journey to the skies against all opposing influences, and without fainting by the way.

And so also all the other sacrifices which, under the former dispensation, were appointed to be offered for sin, pointed directly to the great Antitype foretold by the prophets as being "wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities," and by the shedding of whose most precious blood He has "made an atonement for sin," and "obtained eternal redemption" for them that believe.[2]

Not very "mystical," Renan, these types of Him who was "cut off but not for Himself." Nor were the prophetic "utterances" of the Jewish seers relative to the coming Messiah, and to other events, of that "mystical" character that you would fain represent them to be. Graciously promised to Adam immediately after the fall, Christ was made the subject of prophecy down to the time of the close of the prophetic dispensation. He was the ceaseless burden of prophetic song—the soul and centre, the Alpha and Omega of all Scripture prophecy. The predicted rise and fall of empires all really culminated in Him; and they were all, and are still, either directly or indirectly, made to subserve the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. Whether by their being instrumental in the punishment of His people

[1] John vi. 54–56. [2] Heb. ix. 12.

for their idolatry and sin in the past, or in purging His Church from the sin of carnal entanglements under the present dispensation, or by casting away their own idols and heathenish superstitions—they successively prepare the way for the accomplishment of the predicted triumphs of grace, and have a direct bearing upon the spread and universal establishment of the empire of Christ.

The prophecies viewed as a connected whole, the establishment of a universal empire of truth and righteousness under the dominion of Christ will be seen to be the great end which runs through the entire system. To Christ "all the prophets gave witness;" and hence to Jesus as the Messiah, it is further said, the general spirit of prophecy bears testimony: "I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."[1] So also St. Peter: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."[2] The frequent appeals of Christ Himself to the Old Testament Scriptures as bearing testimony to His Divine mission, plainly show that He regarded Himself as the leading object of Divine prophecy. "Search the Scriptures," said Jesus to the Pharisees, "for they are they that testify of Me."[3] Again: "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me."[4] Again: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil."[5] Again, on standing up to read from the book of

[1] Rev. xix. 10. [2] 1 Peter i. 10, 11. [3] John v. 39. [4] v. 46. [5] Matt. v. 17.

Isaiah when in the synagogue at Nazareth, He "opened the book and found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." He then adds: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." And His hearers, says the evangelist, "all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth."[1] Yet again, after charging the disciples at Emmaus with being "slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken," He said to them: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."[2] And of His interview with the Apostles at Jerusalem, just prior to His ascension, it is written: "And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things."[3]

We have thus the unimpeachable testimony of the sincere, the true, the spotless Jesus Himself, that He, as the Messiah suffering to procure for all nations "repentance and remis-

[1] Luke iv. 17-22. [2] xxiv. 26, 27. [3] xxiv. 44—48.

sion of sins," was prophesied of in the books of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms; in other words, throughout the entire inspired volume of the Old Testament Scriptures. Will you dare dispute this most true, most holy, and righteous testimony of His, M. Renan? A thousandfold better for you had you never been born than thus blasphemously impeach the sincerity and veracity of your most holy Redeemer; or, with most culpable obstinacy and blindness, call into question His certain and intelligent knowledge of what He was speaking. Tender, unspeakably tender, lovely, and gentle, as He is to His own—to you He is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah;" and unless you repent of this your great wickedness, and humbly confess with true and heartfelt contrition the heinousness of your crime before your Saviour and God, He will, according to this most impressive and significant figure of Scripture, "fall upon you and grind you to powder." No "ransom" can deliver you from the place of "eternal wailing," but Christ; and Christ rejected in His sacrificial and mediatorial character, you are lost, for ever lost! Be warned then, Sir, I entreat you—and all who are like-minded with you—for, whether you will receive it or not, the personal application of the figure "is true, and the interpretation thereof sure."

CHAPTER XIII.

PROPHECY.

IN addition to what has been already advanced, let the reader ponder well such passages and predictions as the following; and then, after comparing them with the history of Christ, as given by the Evangelists, say whether any other rational conclusion can possibly be arrived at, than that those passages bear marks the most indubitable of prophetic and Divine inspiration; and that Jesus Christ, the history of whose birth, life, and death, answers to them so exactly in every particular, must therefore have been truly the Heaven-sent Messiah, "the Christ of God," specially and miraculously revealed to execute a Divinely-appointed mission, and carry into effect the all-wise, gracious, and merciful purposes of the Deity.

Of the prophecies which distinctly relate to our Lord, it is said, there are upwards of one hundred. Of these limited space confines us to the selection of a very few—quite enough, however, to elucidate the subject, and demonstrate the truthfulness of our position. With almost the plainness of historical narrative, these passages prophecy of Christ's birth, life, death, and resurrection, and of the peculiar circumstances attending them. First, then, as to the birth and supernatural character of the Messiah. Six hundred years before the event, Isaiah prophecied of it, and said: "Behold, *a virgin* shall conceive, and bear a Son, and

shall call His name Immanuel."[1] Here is a plain reference to the Messiah's miraculous conception; and here, also, He is distinguished by an appellation expressive of His Divinity, as St. Matthew, in his reference to the passage, sets forth: "which being interpreted is, God with us." In the ninth chapter of Isaiah, the same prophet again speaks of His birth and Divinity, and also of the unending nature of His kingdom and government: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulders; and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end."[2]

Daniel prophecies of Him both as "the Son of Man" and "the Most High:" "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him [that is, *given* Him under His prophetic character of *Son of Man*], dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. . . . And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."[3] As in these verses the expressions "Son of Man," and "the Most High," evidently refer to the same Person, who is, under each appellation, spoken of as being *obeyed and served* by "all nations, dominions," etc., both the human and the Divine nature of the subject of this predic-

[1] Isaiah vii. 14. [2] Isaiah ix. 6, 7. [3] Daniel vii. 13, 14, 27.

tion, the Messiah, are doubtless here alluded to. In Jesus Christ conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of a virgin, the predicted character both of the "Son of Man," and of "the Most High," were literally fulfilled; and the further prediction contained in these verses relative to the universality and unending nature of Christ's kingdom, is now in course of fulfilment, and is destined to be fully and literally accomplished in its time.

Changing the terms by which he designates the Messiah, from "the Son of Man," and "the Most High," to "the Prince," and "the Most Holy," in chapter ix. another prediction in reference to the advent of our Lord, as delivered to Daniel by the angel, is recorded in language the most explicit and unmistakable: "Thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophey, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: and the people of the Prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary: and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspread-

ing of abominations He shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." In this prophecy, we have not only the coming of the Messiah foretold, but His Divine character, as expressed by the terms "Most Holy;" also the object of His mission as expressed by, "the Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;" but "to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease:"—which last, we may remark, so far as the oblations and sacrifices of the holy temple are concerned, even Jewish writers are compelled to acknowledge, have taken place. But in their blindness they still look for the Messiah, notwithstanding this portion of the prophecy, at least, they cannot but acknowledge, has been fulfilled from the time of Christ and His Apostles, and cannot therefore be again fulfilled in connection with the advent of any other person. As to *time*, then, it was literally fulfilled by the advent of Jesus, which is one unanswerable proof of His Messiahship. Daniel's prophetic weeks, also, limit the advent of the Messiah to the very time when Jesus appeared.

It is further foretold in this prophecy, that the city and city walls, which had been destroyed by the Chaldeans, were to be rebuilt previous to the Messiah's appearance, and that after He was "cut off," a Prince was to come and destroy the city and the sanctuary, to be attended and followed by great "desolations." Now these events took place exactly as foretold—the building of the city, first "in troublous times" (536—516 B.C.), by Zerubbabel, at the command of Cyrus, the Persian Monarch,[1]—as predicted by Isaiah,[2] and within seventy years of the Babylonish captivity as foretold by Jeremiah[3]—and afterwards by Herod the Great, who was

[1] Ezra i. 1—4. [2] Isaiah xliv. 28. [3] Jeremiah xxix. 10.

made King of Judea, B.C. 37, by the Roman Emperor Augustus. To this temple, which Herod commenced to rebuild in the year 21 before Christ, and which was honoured by the frequent presence of our Lord, and thus made to exceed in glory the temple of Solomon, the Prophet Haggai thus refers: "The Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts."[1]

The final destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, as predicted by Daniel, was effected by Titus, son of Vespasian, Emperor of Rome, seventy years from the time foretold as the date of the Messiah's advent, and thirty-seven from the time—also precisely fixed—when the Messiah should be "cut off." It has, moreover, been in a state of desolation from that day to the present, and will continue to be "until," as says the prophecy, "the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." The fulfilment of the predicted events contained in the prophecy by Daniel—the building of the city and temple before, and their destruction after the predicted time of the Messiah's advent—confirms the fact that the other portion of the prophecy found its fulfilment in the Person of our Blessed Lord, the time of whose birth so exactly corresponded with the time predicted, and whose life, death, and declared mission, so exactly accorded in every respect with the terms of the prophecy.

An additional circumstance, as foretold by Jacob, concurs to show that the Messiah was to come at the time when Jesus appeared: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come;

[1] Haggai ii. 7—9.

and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."[1] That the word "Shiloh" stands for Messiah, the King, all Christian commentators agree; and so it is explained in the ancient Hebrew Commentaries, and also by the Talmudists. Now, although the other tribes of Israel were previous to the advent of Christ dispersed among the nations, the sceptre of Judah still remained. Judah had at this time a King, was governed by its own laws, and the Council of the nation exercised its authority and power. But the fact that the sceptre shortly after the advent of our Lord passed from the tribe of Judah, proves that the time referred to in the prediction in which the Messiah was to appear, had come. Dr. Taylor says: "Our Lord was the only branch of David's family entitled to rule, and He dying without issue, the ruling branch of David's family became extinct; so that after His death, there was no longer any possibility of the continuance of the kingly office in the *direct proper* line of David. The Person who should have held the sceptre was dead: [although He still lives, holds the sceptre, and sways it over His spiritual Israel], the direct descent of the family expired with Him; and, consequently, the sceptre was *bonâ fide* departed." Nor, whether in a direct line or otherwise, has the sceptre been restored to the nation from that time to the present; thus confirming the fact that the prediction of Jacob referred to the *time* of Jesus, and that it had its fulfilment in Him.

Another concurring circumstance pointing to the time of the Messiah's advent, is found in the prophecies of Isaiah and of Malachi, that it should be preceded by a messenger or forerunner. Isaiah says: "The voice of Him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. . . . . O

[1] Genesis xlix. 10.

Zion, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God."[1] And the prediction of Malachi is, "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple."[2] John the Baptist, who was the forerunner of Christ, is evidently the person referred to in these prophecies as the messenger who should arise to "prepare the way of the Lord." And to him whose work and manner of life [see the Gospels and Josephus] exactly corresponded with these predictions, the Evangelists justly applied them.[3] As to *time*, then, there was, in the appearance of John and Jesus Christ, a fulfilment of the prophetic connection between the predicted forerunner and the Messiah, who was to "suddenly," or *immediately* on the appearance of the "messenger," "come to His temple." A forerunner of the Messiah was predicted; a forerunner, in fulfilment, appeared and heralded the grand fact of our Saviour's advent.

Besides the foregoing predictions—some of which, apart from pointing to Jesus as the Messiah, it must not be overlooked, are in themselves distinct and literally fulfilled prophecies—besides the foregoing, given particularly in reference to the predicted *time* of the advent, we may add, that in reference to the distinctive character and mission predicted of the Messiah, and by which He might be distinguished from impostors and from all other men, He was prophecied of, first, as One who should confirm His Divine mission by the performance of a series of miracles which would manifest the benignity of His character, as well as the Omnipotence of His power: "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are

[1] Isa. xl. 3, 9. [2] Malachi iii. 1. [3] Matt. iii.; Mark i.; Luke i.; John i.

of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come . . . He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart; and the tongue of the dumb sing."[1] Prophecied of here as the God who should come, work miracles among His people, and save them—in a prediction by Zechariah, He is spoken of as a King having universal dominion, yet lowly, and bringing salvation: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. And He shall speak peace unto the heathen; and His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth."[2] Christ's lowly, yet Kingly entry into Jerusalem amid the shouts of "Hosanna to the Son of David" from the rejoicing multitude, was a literal fulfilment of a part of this prediction; and the other portion in reference to peace through His Name being extended to the heathen or Gentile world, and to His dominion being extended throughout the earth, is being rapidly and as literally fulfilled. Its fulfilment is, and must continue to be, ceaselessly going on; "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, My Name shall be great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts."[3] And again: "The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."[4] And yet again: "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee."[5] "I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out

[1] Isa. xxxv. 3—6. [2] Zech. ix. 9. 10. [3] Malachi i. 11. [4] Isa. lii. 10. [5] Psalm xxii. 27.

of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto Me every knee shall bow."[1] "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."[2]

In a prophecy by Zechariah, the Messiah is figuratively spoken of as a purifying *fountain:* "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."[3] And did not Christ Himself claim to be such a "fountain," and, in every sense of the word, make good that claim? And did not the Heaven-inspired, miracle-working Apostles further and effectually substantiate His claim to it? This is undeniable. And has not the individual heart-experience of every true believer from their day to the present, been confirmatory of the great fact that an ever-flowing fountain for the washing away of "sin and uncleanness," is found in Jesus? First issuing from the bleeding side of our Immanuel when pierced upon the accursed tree, to the eye of faith it has continued to flow on with undiminished efficacy to the present; and in the benignity of its Heaven-ordained course, within view of the faithful, it will continue to flow on, carrying with it healing, life, and salvation, to the end of time.

No other hope has fallen man of ever obtaining spiritual cleansing and meetness to appear in the presence of God, but through the fountain of Christ's blood. "His own arm brought salvation," and by Him, as predicted in the following, it was revealed to men: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to

[1] Isaiah xlv. 23. [2] xl. 4, 5. [3] Zech. xiii. 1.

preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified."[1] To perpetuate the preaching of these "good tidings," Christ has ordained apostles and ministers; but in a vicarious sense, He stands alone in this matter: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak righteousness, mighty to save. I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with Me."[2]

In Malachi iii. 1, the coming Messiah is referred to under the appellation of "the Messenger of the Covenant" who should come as a refiner or purifier of His people: "The Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in, behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers sope. And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." The spiritual nature of the Messiah's mission is here indicated by His being represented under the figure of a *Refiner;* and as such, in the person of Jesus He actually came, and not in the character of an earthly sovereign, bringing dominion, grandeur, and worldly prosperity to the nation, as, through the blindness

[1] Isaiah lxi. 1–3; Luke iv. 17–22. [2] Isaiah lxiii. 1, 3.

of their carnal aspirations, was expected by the Jews. His being "despised and rejected of men" as elsewhere predicted, might also have been inferred from this passage: But who "may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?"

In like manner, the Counsellor, Prince, Mighty God, etc., of Isaiah's prophecy, is, in the same, denominated a "Light"—a great moral Light: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."[1] And in Malachi iv. 2, He is prophecied of under the figure of the *Sun:* "But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings." And does not Jesus truly answer to the character of the "Sun of righteousness?" What the sun is to the physical world, has He not been, and is He not still, to the moral world, even Renan and his school being judges? Renan has himself pronounced Him the incomparable moral luminary who actually created the absolute and eternal religion of humanity. And so, we may add, is He of that "*righteousness*" which ceaselessly flows to the penitent, believing sinner, and of which He is the inexhaustible and eternal "Sun."

With regard to the predicted death of the Messiah, the prophets were quite as explicit and circumstantial, as they were with respect to His life, character, and works. Jesus said to His disciples: "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered."[2] A reference is here made to a prophecy by Zechariah: "Awake, O Sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd and the

[1] Isaiah ix. 2. [2] Mark xiv. 27.

sheep shall be scattered."[1] This is a prediction of the Messiah's death by judicial violence. So, also, Daniel ix. 26, and Isaiah liii. nearly entire, to which Christ also refers as a prophecy concerning Himself.[2]

The betrayal of our Lord for thirty pieces of silver, and the purchase of the potter's field with the money, are thus typically predicted by Zechariah: "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the potter: a goodly price [ironically] that I was priced at of them! And I took the pieces of silver and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord."[3]

The psalmist, according to St. Peter (Acts ii. 29–31), in the following passage predicts the *resurrection* of the Messiah: "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."[4] The word "hell" or *hades*, as the original imports, says Dr. A. Clarke, here means, "the state of *separate spirits*, or the state of the *dead*. Hades was a general term among the Greek writers, by which they expressed this state: and this HADES was *Tartarus* to the *wicked*, and *Elysium* to the *good*." That the psalmist predicted the resurrection of our Lord, "the Holy One," in this passage, and also referred to Him prophetically in many other passages, there can be no question. Christ recognized the Psalms as containing prophetic allusions to Himself, and declared that they "must all be fulfilled."[5] Hence His personal application and self-appropriation of the passage, "Thou art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner."[6] Hence also His utterance, in His

[1] Zec. xiii. 7. [2] Luke xxii. 37. [3] Zec. xi. 12, 13. [4] Psalm xvi. 10.
[5] Luke xxiv. 44. [6] Psalm cxviii. 21, 22.

expiring moments, of a quotation from the 22nd Psalm: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me"—an exclamation expressive of the agony felt by the human nature of Christ from the temporary absence of the *conscious* sustaining power of the Divine presence, necessarily arising from the expiatory nature of the Saviour's sufferings. The wrath of a sin-avenging God was for the time being upon Him. For you and for me He bore it, fellow-sinner. Think of it! And let the thought melt your heart into penitence, gratitude, and love.

Passages in the Psalms were quoted, also, by the Evangelists as having a prophetic relation to Christ; and Peter styles David a patriarch and a prophet,[1] no less than a king. The passage, "They pierced My hands and My feet," therefore, is to be understood as expressed prophetically by the Psalmist in his typical relation to Christ. Verse 18 of the same Psalm,[2] "They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture," is likewise prophetic of what was actually done by the soldiers with the garments of our Lord, at the time of His crucifixion; and the evangelists accordingly refer to it as a literal accomplishment of David's prediction; as they do also to the piercing of Christ's side in fulfilment of the prediction by Zechariah: "And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced."[3]

Something more than "a gigantic dream" about this system of Messianic predictions, M. Renan. And so, also, we might say of the prophecies which relate to other events than that of the personal mission of Jesus; as, for instance —to give a very few examples out of hundreds that are recorded in the Scriptures—where Moses prophesies of the Jews that after his death they would "utterly corrupt themselves," and turn aside from the way which he had

[1] Acts ii. 29, 30. [2] Psalm xxii. [3] Zec. xii. 10.

commanded them; "and evil," said he, "will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger, through the work of your hands. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other"[1]—predictions notoriously and most signally fulfilled in the history of the Jewish people. "And the Lord," Moses continues, "shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance. which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young. And when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation."[2] Now, from history, both sacred and secular, we know that these predictions, uttered by Moses upwards of three thousand years ago, were literally fulfilled both at the siege of Samaria by Benhadad, King of Syria, and subsequently at that of Jerusalem by the Romans.[3] Fifteen centuries from the time that Moses uttered the prediction relative to the nation coming against them "from far," and "as the eagle flieth," the Roman nation, "of fierce countenance," with its "eagle" ensign. did come up against them; and after reducing them to such straits that even their "tender and delicate women" were driven to eat their own children, exactly as predicted by Moses, those of them who escaped the horrible massacre which followed the siege were carried into captivity, thousands of them being sent to toil in the

[1] Deut. xxxi. 29. [2] Deut. xxviii. 49, 64; Lev. xxvi. 25, 29, 31.
[3] 2 Kings vi. 29. Josephus, Bell. Jud. vi. iii. § 4.

Egyptian mines, and thousands more offered for sale until the market became so glutted that purchasers were not to be found; thus literally fulfilling the last verse of the prediction: "And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again; and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you;"[1] that is, they were offered for sale until no man should be found to buy those that remained unsold. These were either slain, given away, or destroyed by wild beasts in the amphitheatres.

A prophecy by Isaiah, limiting the event predicted to a certain specified period, was delivered by that prophet in the time of Ahaz, King of Judah, and reads as follows: "Then said the Lord unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, and say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not. . . . Because, Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Zabeal: Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people."[2] This prediction was accomplished to the very letter, at the close of the period beginning with the second year of the reign of Ahaz, King of Judah, and extending to the middle of the reign of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, who carried away the Israelites as captives, and gave over Samaria to be inhabited by a race of foreign idolators.

Another prophecy resembling, as to specific time, the prediction last given, is found in Jeremiah xxix. 10, where

[1] Deut. xxviii. 68. [2] Isaiah vii. 3—8.

the captivity of the Jews under Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, is predicted, and limited to seventy years. Isaiah also prophesied of the same event, and predicted that a Persian Monarch should be the chosen instrument of its fulfilment. The very name of the monarch, and personal circumstances in connection with his life, were given in the prophecy upwards of one hundred years before he was born. The prediction reads thus: "For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place."[1] The prediction, naming the instrument of its fulfilment, reads as follows: "Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, and He that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by Myself; that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backwards, and maketh their knowledge foolish; that confirmeth the word of His servant, and performeth the counsel of His messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof; That saith of Cyrus, He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron; and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret

[1] Jeremiah xxix. 10.

places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob, My servant's sake, and Israel Mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me."[1] What a withering rebuke to the great weakness and exceeding blindness of infidel incredulity is contained in this prophecy! The chapter in Ezra narrating the history of its accomplishment begins thus: "Now in the first year of Cyrus, King of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus, King of Persia, The Lord God of Heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (He is the God), which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill offering for the House of God that is in Jerusalem."[2]

These predictions with their very literal and unmistakable fulfilment, given on the authority of holy unimpeachable witnesses, need no comment; they speak for themselves. "But there are prophecies," says the learned Dr. Dick, "which were uttered several thousand years ago, of the accomplishment of which we have *sensible evidence* at the present moment, if we look around us and consider the state of the nations and empires of the world. For example, it was prophesied respecting Ishmael, the son of

[1] Isaiah xliv. 24, to xlv. 4. [2] Ezra i. 1–4.

Abraham, 'that he should be a wild man; that his hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against him; that he should dwell in the presence of all his brethren; that he should be multiplied exceedingly, beget twelve princes, and become a great nation.' This prediction has been literally accomplished in the Arabs, the undoubted descendants of Ishmael, who, from time immemorial, have been robbers by land and pirates by sea; and though their hands have been against every man, and every man's hand against them, they have *always* dwelt, and at this day still dwell, 'in the presence of their brethren,' a free and independent people. The greatest conquerors in the world have attempted to subdue them, but their attempts uniformly failed of success. When they appeared on the brink of ruin, they were signally and providentially delivered. Alexander the Great was preparing an expedition against them, when he was cut off in the flower of his age. Pompey was in the career of his conquest, when urgent affairs called him to another quarter. Gallius had penetrated far into their country, when a fatal disease destroyed great numbers of his men, and obliged him to return. Trajan besieged their capital city twice, and was twice repelled from before it. The Turks have attempted, but have hitherto been unable to subdue the Arabs, or even to restrain their depredations; and they are obliged to pay them a sort of annual tribute for the safe passage of the pilgrims who go to Mecca to pay their devotions.

"The curse pronounced upon Ham, the father of Canaan, could also be shown to have been signally accomplished in the case of the Canaanites, and the Africans, their descendants, who have been literally 'a servant of servants to their

brethren.' They were under the dominion, first of the Romans, then of the Saracens, and now of the Turks. And in what ignorance, barbarity, slavery, and misery, do most of them remain? For many years past, many thousands of them have been bought and sold, like beasts in the market, and conveyed from one quarter of the world to do the work of beasts in another.

"The present state of the Jews, compared with ancient predictions, is one of the most striking and convincing proofs of the literal fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies. The following prediction respecting them was uttered more than seventeen hundred years before the commencement of the Christian era: 'The Lord shall scatter thee among all people from the one end of the earth even unto the other. And among those nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest, but the Lord shall give thee a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind.'—'And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all the nations whither the Lord shall lead you.'[1] The whole history of the Jewish nation since the destruction of Jerusalem, as well as the present state of that singular people, forms a striking commentary upon these ancient predictions, and shows that they have been fully and literally accomplished. The Jews, it is well known, have been dispersed almost over the whole face of the globe for more than seventeen hundred years; they have been despised and hated by all nations; they have suffered the most cruel persecutions; 'their life has hung in doubt before them, and they have feared day and night,' both for their property and their lives; they have been sold in multitudes, like cattle in the market; they have been exposed on public theatres, to

[1] Deut. xxviii. 65, 37.

exhibit fights, or be devoured by wild beasts. So strong were poplar prejudices and suspicions against them, that in the year 1348, on *suspicion* of their having poisoned the springs and wells, a million and-a-half of them were cruelly massacred. In 1492, five hundred thousand of them were driven out of Spain, and 150,000 from Portugal, and even at the present moment they are, in most places, subjected both to civil incapacities and unchristian severities. Yet, notwithstanding the hatred and contempt in which they are held, wherever they appear, they are most obstinately tenacious of the religion of their fathers, although their ancestors were so prone to apostatize from it; and although most of them seem to be utter strangers to piety, and pour contempt on the *moral* precepts of their own law, they are most obstinately attached to the *ceremonial* institutions of it, burdensome and inconvenient as they are. They have never been amalgamated with any of the nations among which they dwelt; they remain a distinct people, notwithstanding their numerous dispersions; their numbers are not diminished; and were they collected into one body, they would form a nation as numerous and powerful as in the most flourishing periods of the Jewish commonwealth. The existence of the Jews in such circumstances, as *a distinct nation*, so contrary to the history of every other nation, and to the course of human affairs in similar cases, may justly be considered as a *standing miracle* for the truth of Divine revelation. Such a scene in the conduct of the Divine government cannot be paralleled in the history of any other people on the face of the earth; and their being permitted so long to survive the dissolution of their own state, and to continue a distinct nation, is doubtless intended for the accomplishment of another important prediction, viz., that

'they may return and seek the Lord their God,' and 'fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days.'"

To the foregoing, as connected with the literal and unmistakable fulfilment of Scripture prophecies of which we have *sensible evidence* at the present time, allow me to subjoin a few observations in reference to the past and present condition of Tyre, Babylon, and Egypt. The ancient city of Tyre, situated on the border of the Mediterranean, was both insular and continental; the former being confined to a small rocky island about two miles in circumference, while the latter, inland from the opposite coast, was a city of vast extent, the ruins of which, after its demolition by Nebuchadnezzar, measuring nineteen miles round, as we learn from Pliny and Strabo. These ruins were afterwards made use of by Alexander in the construction of a prodigious causeway or isthmus, above half-a-mile long, to the insular city, which thenceforth grew to great power and opulence as a maritime state. It subsequently fell alternately under the dominion of the Syrians, Egyptians, Romans, Saracens, and the Crusaders, and was finally sacked and razed by the Mamelukes of Egypt, A.D. 1289.

In the time of Ezekiel ancient Tyre was a very wealthy, flourishing, and populous city, and gave promise of standing as a commercial maritime state as long as the world shall stand; but, when in the height of its prosperity, that prophet predicted that the time was coming when God would "make her like the top of a rock, and a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea."[1] Also, that this "renowned city," at whose downfall "the princes of the sea and the inhabitants of the isles should be astonished and take up a lamentation," should become "a desolate city like the cities that are not inhabited," and that she should "be built

[1] Ezek. xxvi. 4, 5.

no more."[1] How literally and circumstantially these predictions have been fulfilled has been borne witness to by many travellers, and Volney among others, who have visited the seat of the ancient city. For centuries past no greater indication of wealth has been seen than "the fish spread upon the rocks to be cured, and the nets spread to be dried." Maundrell, who travelled in the Holy Land and visited the site of this city in 1697, says of it: "On the north side it has an old Turkish ungarrisoned castle, besides which you see nothing here but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, &c.; there being not so much as one entire house left! Its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly by fishing; who seem to be preserved in this place by Divine Providence, as a visible argument how God has fulfilled His Word concerning Tyre—namely, that it should be 'as the top of a rock; a place for fishers to dry their nets upon.'"

The overthrow and utter desolation of ancient Babylon—a city the strength, wealth, and magnificence of which made it the wonder of the world—is thus predicted by the Prophet Isaiah: "Behold I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall

[1] Ezek. xxvi. 14–17; xxvii. 35.

dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged. For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts."[1]—We make no apology for the insertion of an occasional lengthy quotation from Scripture, with a view to the elucidation of our subject; for God's word is not only fitted to give grace, forcibleness, and beauty to every description of human composition, but it is in a peculiar sense "quick and powerful," and is eminently calculated to arrest the attention, and produce in the mind of the sincere inquirer a conviction of its high and superhuman original; so much so, indeed, that the man who can read the prophets and much of the Old Testament Scriptures, and not see the majesty of God in its language and sentiment—the unmistakable presence of the Supreme Ruler and Governor in its majestic utterances, must be dark and blind indeed. Both his spiritual vision and mental discernment must, we unhesitatingly affirm, from some untoward cause be extraordinarily defective.

The prediction just given relates to the overthrow of Babylon, the metropolis of the Babylonian empire, which was effected by the Medes and Persians—Cyrus the Great, as was predicted of him by Isaiah, being the first to enter as a conqueror "the two-leaved gates" of the city. From this period Babylon ceased to be the metropolis of a kingdom, and its grandeur and magnificence rapidly declined. Under Darius Hystaspes its hundred gates and impregnable walls

[1] Isa. xiii. 17–22; xiv. 22, 23.

were demolished; and its temple was plundered and laid in ruins by Xerxes, the successor of Darius. The space enclosed by the ruins of the ancient city, Jerome tells us, was employed about the end of the fourth century by the Persians, as an enclosure for wild beasts, preserved there for the pleasures of the chase. And being visited about the end of the twelfth century by Benjamin of Tudela, in Navarre, he "observed only a few ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace remaining, but so full of serpents and other venomous reptiles, that it was dangerous to inspect them merely." A similar account is given by many other travellers of later date.[1] And so we find that the Divine inspiration of the prophecies of Holy Scripture, which are successively verified, without exception, by the events of history, is invariably confirmed by study, observation, and research.

The last that we shall notice in this connection is a prophecy by Ezekiel against Egypt: "Yet thus saith the Lord; at the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered; and I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros [name given to the Southern part of Egypt], into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms: neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations; for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations."[2] That this prophecy, which was delivered more than two thousand years ago, when Egypt was powerful and great among the nations, has been literally fulfilled, no one at all conversant with the history of Egypt from that time to the present can for a moment entertain a rational doubt. Made tributary from that period successively to the Babylonian, Persian, and the empires succeed-

[1] See A. R. Encyclopœdia. [2] Ezekiel xxix. 13—15.

ing, it has remained subject to the yoke of foreigners, and is without a native prince, even to this day. And so, as the "basest of kingdoms," it will doubtless remain until it may please God to fulfil another prediction of Holy Writ which seems to point to the future of this once haughty but now greatly humbled nation. Like the Jews, when they shall turn to the Lord and seek help from the God of Israel, they may look for a revival of their former prosperity, which seems to be indicated by the following passage: "And the Lord shall smite Egypt: He shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the Lord, and He shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them. For they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and He shall send them a Saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them."[1]

To the fact that Egypt has been deprived of its sceptre, has had "no more a prince of the land," and has continued to the present to remain in the humiliating condition foretold by the Jewish prophets, Volney and Gibbon are witnesses: "Such is the state of Egypt. Deprived, twenty-three centuries ago, of her natural proprietors, she has seen her fertile fields successively a prey to the Persians, the Macedonians, the Romans, the Greeks, the Arabs, the Georgians, and, at length, the race of Tartars distinguished by the name of Ottoman Turks. The Mamelukes, purchased as slaves, and introduced as soldiers, soon usurped the power and elected a leader. If their first establishment was a singular event, their continuance is not less extraordinary. They are replaced by slaves brought from their original country. The system of oppression is methodical. Everything the traveller sees or hears reminds him he is in the country of slavery and tyranny." "A more unjust and absurd constitution cannot be devised than that which con-

[1] Isaiah xix. 20—22.

demns the natives of a country to perpetual servitude, under the arbitrary dominion of strangers and slaves. Yet such has been the state of Egypt about five hundred years. The most illustrious Sultans of the Baharite and Borgite dynasties were themselves promoted from the Tartar and Circassian bands; and the four-and-twenty beys or military chiefs have ever been succeeded, not by their sons, but by their servants." Such is the testimony of two infidel writers to the truth of Scripture prophecy—themselves scoffers at the Bible, they were nevertheless eye-witnesses of the facts foretold in it more than two thousand four hundred years before!

Very many of the prophecies that we have left unnoticed might, doubless, be advantageously considered by those who are wont, with M. Renan, to designate the predictions of Holy Scripture, "mystical utterances:" it might, perhaps, be interesting and profitable both to them and to us to further pursue this subject, and trace, for instance, the predicted rise and fall of the great monarchies and empires of the world, together with a great many other prophetic events of varying importance which are recorded in Holy Scripture; but the examples given, attested, as they are, by history both sacred and profane, are deemed ample, and will doubtless be regarded by the candid as quite sufficient to prove the Divine origin of the prophecies. Very many of them, as we have seen, are as plain and as easily understood as any historical narrative—the expression of the predictions in themselves remarkably clear, and the application and literal fulfilment of them unmistakably sure.

CHAPTER XIV.

RENAN'S CREED.

TO first dislike the holy truths of God's Word and then disbelieve them, is a process of which the human mind is very capable. The candid though undecided inquirer, however, who sincerely and earnestly desires to know *that he may do* the will of God, will, in all likelihood, be led to seek Divine help; and doing so, he will find that his mind will be so enlightened, and his judgment so directed, that he will be able to "know the doctrine whether it be of God," and to believe and embrace "the truth as it is in Jesus." But from the days of Cain, who envied and killed his brother Abel, there have always been those who have envied and hated the good and the truly spiritual, and who have charged them with monopolizing the grace and favour of God to the detriment and condemnation of the rest of Adam's race. But what saith God to such? What said He to Cain, unto whom "and his offering He had not respect?"—"Why art thou wrath, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." Now such, in our judgment, is Renan; sin lieth at his door, and unto him and his book "offering," therefore, "God hath not respect." He has created for himself a "Son of God," and formed for himself a *creed*—as indeed every man must necessarily have, whether written

down and formally subscribed to or not. His work, therefore, should not have been entitled "The Life of Jesus," but "Renan's Creed, under cover of the Life of Jesus." Denying, as he does, the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, and endeavouring, though vainly, in the use of every means in his power, to make Christ the abettor of some of his heretical notions, however flattering and complimentary the terms of praise which he accords to certain parts of the Book, he attempts to deprive the sacred volume of that high position which it has always held, and justly so, in the estimation of Christian men. He is, therefore, an enemy to Christ, an enemy to His saving truth, and an enemy to his fellow-man. No conceivable good can possibly arise from his labours, but evil and only evil, except, indeed, so far as it may be overruled by Him who is able to make even "the wrath of man to praise Him." His work, the great work of his life, therefore, places him in a position, in his relation to God and man, the most unenviable and unfortunate that can well be conceived.

His Creed, composed for the most part of what he ought not to believe, and omitting nearly all that it is of importance for him to believe, if put into words, would read about as follows:—1. "I believe in one God, the Creator and Father of all. 2. I believe in Jesus as the highest type of humanity, but not in His Divinity, nor the sinless perfection of His moral nature. 3. I believe in the Bible as a human production, partly authentic and partly not, but do not believe in a revelation from God, except that by which He has revealed Himself to us in nature; and therefore not in the Trinity, the personality of the Holy Ghost, and the personal existence of Satan. 4. I believe in the holy Catholic and eternal religion as founded by Jesus of

Nazareth; but not in public and formal, or temple worship. 5. I believe in a universal human brotherhood, a future state, and the immortality of the soul or spiritual part of man; but not in his original perfection, his fall, and redemption by Jesus Christ. 6. I believe in the self-elevation and renovation of man's moral nature through a steadfast adherence to the practice of virtue; but not in the spiritual regeneration of his nature by the Spirit and power of God. 7. I believe the system of nature to be governed by immutable laws, and do not believe in the supernatural, and therefore not in miracles, prophecy, Divine inspiration, the final dissolution of our world, and the resurrection of the body, followed by the general judgment. In short, I believe everything that a philosopher should believe, but nothing, either in relation to this world or to the next, save what commends itself to my own unaided reason and judgment, unenlightened by any supernatural influence or power whatever."

Now before proceeding to a more particular consideration of some of the separate articles of this creed, allow me in general terms to say that, according to Divine teaching, such a creed will ruin, hopelessly and everlastingly ruin, the most virtuous man of the world in Christendom. We say, in *Christendom;* for the benighted but virtuous heathen who has never heard the sound of the Gospel—virtuous according to the light that he has—the Bible excepts. God loves the world, and the Spirit of God measurably "enlightens every man that cometh into the world." There is a God, and doubtless a gracious influencing Providence in heathen lands as well as in those which are professedly Christian. He who noticeth even a sparrow falling is not unmindful of them; and the heathen that conscientiously

lives up to the light implanted within, it would appear from the reasoning of the apostle Paul (Rom. ii. 11–15), is accounted righteous, and accepted of God. The future state of the heathen, however, we may safely leave with the Judge of all the earth who cannot but do right. "The secret things," Moses says, "belong unto the Lord; but those which are revealed unto us and to our children for ever." To us the Gospel has been revealed, and by it, therefore, according to the Scriptures, we shall be judged.

Renan, however, disputes its having been supernaturally revealed to us by God. Even Jesus, although placed by him "in the first rank of the true sons of God," is but an uninspired man, possessing no supernatural endowment whatever, since nothing of the supernatural is admitted into his creed. But if Jesus were merely man, and without also supernatural or Divine inspiration, how—as Renan says of Him—could He of all other men either before or since His time, have been "more than a reformer," but the absolute *creator* of the eternal religion of humanity?" These are Renan's words as given on page 223. Who is He, if but a man, the upstart of a moment, that He should create a religion *for eternity?* Such a creation clearly involves the Infinite. It is absurd to suppose that the creation of a religion for the eternal worship of the Deity Himself, is left to the uninspired mind of the creature. If the Deity desires the worship of His intelligent creatures, how is it possible for them to know that He desires it, what the character of such worship, and in what form it is to be observed, if He does not reveal His mind on the subject to them? It is evident that either the Infinite does not require worship at the hands of His creatures; or that, requiring it, He has by some means revealed His mind and will on the subject to

them. And this could only be done in one or another of three ways: either by direct, open, and personal intercourse on His part with the creature himself; or by commissioning an angel to appear and reveal His will to men; or by the direct and supernatural inspiration of one or more of His creatures, thus, in effect, endowing them for the time being with the unerring wisdom of the Infinite, so far as it relates to a knowledge of His will in relation to Divine worship and service. And this inspiration of the creature, too, in order to convince the world of such inspiration, would require to be attended with a supernatural power in the individual professing it, to perform works of a supernatural character, in other words, to work miracles. Now, no other way than this is reasonable, and more than this, it is evident that no other way is possible. To be rational then, we must either reject worship altogether, or observe it as having, in one or all of these three modes, been revealed to us by the Deity. And thus revealed by God it certainly has been.

Being fully assured then, on the ground of ample evidence, as shown in the preceding pages, that the Bible is a revelation from God, and that our Lord's words are therefore veritable expressions of the Divine mind, to prove the utter hopelessness of that man's case who entertains the belief of M. Renan, omitting the writings of the Apostles bearing more directly and at length upon every article of his creed, we need but refer to a few of Christ's own utterances. His sermon on the mount in particular, Renan acknowledges to be an authentic discourse, and he speaks of it in terms of the highest admiration—in such language, for instance, as the following: "Jesus will ever be the creator of the pure spirit of religion; the sermon on the

mount will never be surpassed."[1] "It is the most beautiful code of perfect life that any moralist has traced."[2]

Every one who has read Renan's book, even the most cursorily, must have observed that self-righteousness, the characteristic of the Pharisee, is the author's great stronghold throughout. The sufficiency of our own righteousness —the righteousness which we are capable of working out for ourselves—underlies and gives colouring to the whole; but for this notion, indeed, by which he has been beguiled and led captive, his romance had probably never seen the light. He acknowledges God, it is true, but it is in a way that shows him to be utterly ignorant both of God and of himself. He in effect thanks God that he is "not like other men," who believe themselves to be spiritually destitute of all that is truly righteous and good. In the plenitude of his self-sufficiency, he thanks God that he does not need, as such men, a righteousness not his own. While other men may need, or think they need, a Saviour, he is fully persuaded that his own righteousness is such as to enable him to stand quite complete in himself. Our classic professor has probably consulted Cicero and learnt of him. This pagan moralist thus expresses his confidence in the justifying nature of his own virtues, as well as his uncertainty as to his existence in the future state: "While I exist I shall be troubled at nothing, since I have no fault whatever; and if I shall not exist, I shall be devoid of all feeling." In a benighted pagan such a sentiment is excusable; but it cannot be so regarded when entertained by an inhabitant of a country wherein the Gospel is preached.

But let us appeal to an authority on the subject, and see what Christ says of such Pharisaic presumption—Are His sentiments as expressed in His sermon on the mount in

[1] Page 304. [2] Page 87.

exact accordance with M. Renan's mind on the subject? Let us see: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." These men trusted to their own righteousness, a righteousness which they supposed themselves to have through an observance of "vain tradition," in connection with the keeping of the law of God after a fashion of their own—Renan like—but such, mark well, He says, "shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Going about to establish their own righteousness, they had not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. The righteousness which alone will avail us in the day of judgment, and qualify us for the kingdom of heaven, Christ teaches us, must come from without—even from Himself, and is referred to in verse 6 of His sermon, where He pronounces a blessing, with the promise that they shall be filled, on all such as hunger and thirst after it. He teaches the same doctrine in verse 33, chapter 6: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." *His* righteousness, not your own—the righteousness which is of God by faith, imputed to us through a believing view of Jesus as our Redeemer,[1] with the power thenceforth communicated to fear God, work righteousness, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight; and without which special power, received through faith in Him who hath purchased it for us, we could no more do such things in the manner required, no more even begin to fear God and work righteousness acceptably, than the Ethiopian could change his colour or the leopard its spots, each of which is an absolute impossibility.

"I am the bread of life;. I am the vine, and ye are the branches," says Jesus; "he that abideth in Me shall bring

[1] Rom iv. 6, 11; x. 4.

forth much fruit; but without Me *ye can do nothing*." What says M. Renan to such teaching of Christ? Rather humbling this to the lofty height of proud self-righteousness, to which, through the imagined self-sufficiency of nature, he has exalted himself. Passages descriptive of the inherent depravity of man's moral nature—such as, "From within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness"—such passages, although uttered by the leading character of his romance, he prefers passing over in significant silence.

Christ says, moreover, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find."[1] Does M. Renan believe in this asking and receiving, seeking and finding? Not, certainly, if we are to judge from his remarks on prayer,[2] which he makes to consist in solitary "meditation," regarding it as "almost sin to ask for this or that particular thing." But to the words, ask and receive, seek and find, Christ adds: "How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that *ask* Him." And if He gives "good things," then He, of course, gives "particular things," and this in answer to prayer, or as the result of asking.

Jesus, in His sermon, makes the gate strait, and the way to heaven narrow, being "the way of holiness," and "few," He says, "there be that find it." Is M. Renan's way to life and heaven thus strait and narrow? Very far from it; he quite reverses the Gospel order of things in this particular. In direct opposition to the teaching of Christ, he makes the way to heaven broad, and the way leading to destruction narrow. His words are: "Men did not become His disciples by believing this thing or that thing, but in being

[1] Matt. vii. 7. [2] Page 89.

attached to His person and in loving Him."[1] Referring to His being an enemy to priestcraft and formal worship, he says: "By this *we are all* His disciples and His successors."[2] Again he says: "Jesus has no more authentic followers than those who seem to deny Him.[3] Whatever revolution takes place will not prevent us from attaching ourselves in religion to the grand intellectual and moral line at the head of which shines the name of Jesus. In this sense we are Christians, even when we separate ourselves on almost all points from the Christian tradition which has preceded us."[4] It will thus be seen that Renan is continually at variance with the teaching of Christ, even in the discourse which, for its moral grandeur and divinity of sentiment, he professes to so highly admire.

Again: in verse 12 of His sermon on the mount, Christ recognises the prophets of the Old Testament dispensation as God-sent men, some of whom were "persecuted for righteousness sake;" and in verses 17, 18, he says: "I am not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Does M. Renan believe this part of Christ's "sermon," which, he says, "will never be surpassed?" Nay, verily, but over this part the world must even concede to him the right of drawing his cancelling pen, meekly submitting the matter, without a shadow of ground for it, to the strange caprices of his whimsical judgment.

"He that denieth Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God," Christ says. Renan denies Him His Divinity before men, and all that is essential to His true character as the Messiah; he denies Him the Divine homage which Jesus claims to be His due as Lord and

[1] Page 302. [2] Page 90. [3] Page 207. [4] Page 304.

Saviour—the sentence is therefore against him: "He shall be denied before the angels of God."

Another of Christ's utterances — which, although not found in His sermon on the mount, is nevertheless quite as authentic—is this: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."[1] Has M. Renan believed this Gospel? But what Gospel? We answer: "The Gospel of Christ;" or, in other words of Scripture, "The Gospel of our salvation;" or, as M. Renan is partial to the expression, "The Gospel of the kingdom." But what kingdom? Renan answers: "'The Kingdom of God,' which Jesus says, 'is within you.'" But of what does this kingdom consist? The Apostle Paul answers: "The Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," purchased for the believer; he also explains, by Him who "hath abolished death" with all the penal consequences of sin to the believer, by "the sacrifice of Himself." Has Renan, then, believed this Gospel of Jesus whom he professes to so much admire and love? Confessedly not. By his own words he is condemned; to which must be added the authoritative and unalterable sentence of Christ, "He that believeth not shall be damned." And having gone about to preach "another Gospel" than that which Christ and His Apostles preached, it must not be concealed that the sentence of the Apostle is, in his case, also awfully applicable—"Let him be accursed."

Return, then, poor wanderer, return, be entreated, and call upon Thy God, if so be He may pardon the sin of thy heart and give thee repentance unto life, ere thine iniquity prove thy ruin! Alas! however, that it is possible, even to

[1] Mark xvi. 15, 16.

this day, for infatuated man, "when he *heareth the words of this curse* that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of my heart." In hearing the words of Jesus and receiving them not, M. Renan is building his hopes, as Christ puts it, on a foundation of sand; when therefore "a blast from the breath of His mouth," proceeding from the eternal throne, shall have levelled his high hopes to the ground, great indeed will be his fall. In vain will it be for him to cry, "Lord, Lord," in that day; for, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." But the man who does not believe that the will of the Father has been revealed to him, cannot, of course, do it. His rejection of the testimony concerning it is bad fruit proceeding from a corrupt heart, to begin with; all his other fruit therefore, being produced in a state of unbelief, must be Scripturally, or in the sight of God, "corrupt." And the further sentence of his professedly much-loved Jesus concerning such is, "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Matthew vii. 19.—Sermon on the Mount.

CHAPTER XV.

THE END OF THE WORLD, VISIONS, SCIENCE, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENA.

N page 221, M. Renan quotes the prediction of Jesus, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come." But he seems incapable of comprehending the fact that in this passage His predicted coming was simply to judge and effect the destruction of Jerusalem, and not to judge and put an end to the world, as Renan erroneously supposes. "If, however," Renan adds, "His only thought had been that the end of time was near, and that we must prepare for it—to renounce a world ready to crumble, to detach one's self little by little from the present life, and to aspire to the kingdom about to come, would have formed the gist of His preaching. The teaching of Jesus always had a much wider scope. He proposed to Himself to create a new state of humanity, and not merely to prepare the end of that which was in existence."[1] Does M. Renan not perceive from this that he must have misapprehended and misinterpreted Christ's prediction in reference to His second coming? It appears not—evident as one might think it to be to every one else—for on page 202 we find the following remarkable passage: "By an illusion common to all great reformers, Jesus imagined the end to be much nearer than it really was." "This true kingdom of God," he further observes,

[1] Page 205.

"which like the grain of mustard seed has become a tree which overshadows the world, and amidst whose branches the birds have their nests, was understood, wished for, and founded by Jesus. By the side of a false, cold, and impossible idea of an ostentatious advent, He conceived the real city of God." How very wise and yet how very foolish, M. Renan here represents Jesus to be. Pity that He was not indued with the wisdom of a Renan, so that He might have been able to discern between the part of His teaching which was illusory and false, and that which was real and true! But, says Renan, since "His dream rendered Him strong against death, and each of us owes that which is best in himself to Him, let us pardon Him His hope of a vain Apocalypse, and of a second coming in great triumph upon the clouds of heaven." [1] The "pardon," we apprehend, is most needed by him who dares to thus impiously speak of the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth; and this, poor infatuated man, he will one day be constrained to admit.

But that our Lord and His inspired apostles neither taught nor expected the *immediate* end of the world, is evident not only from the fact that it did not immediately come to an end, but also from the fact that while there is nothing to be found in the New Testament to substantiate the assumption, many passages found therein either assert or plainly imply the contrary. Christ's prediction, *e.g.*, relative to "the kingdom of God" being taken from the Jewish nation and "given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof," [2] necessarily involves an indefinite and more or less prolonged period of future time. And so also the reasoning of the Apostle Paul bearing upon this subject: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be

[1] Pages 204, 205. [2] Matt. xxi. 43.

ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, *until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.* And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."[1] And again: "For I know this, that after My departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."[2] The same thing is also clearly set forth in connection with our Lord's description of the miseries which should attend the siege of Jerusalem: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, *nor ever shall be*"[3]—an expression implying an indefinitely prolonged period subsequent to the predicted destruction of Jerusalem, following which, Christ said also, its inhabitants should "be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."[4] The same teaching is further borne witness to by the accusers of Stephen, inasmuch as according to such teaching a new order of things among the Jews was only to commence with the destruction of their city: "For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall *change the customs* which Moses delivered us."[5] And St. John, it should be remembered, divined that previous to the general resurrection and at a period beginning sometime in the distant future, Satan should "be bound a thousand years" and should "deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled."[6] Ephesians ii. 7,

[1] Rom. xi. 25-27. [2] Acts xx. 29, 30. [3] Matt. xxiv. 21.
[4] Luke xxi. 24. [5] Acts vi. 14. [6] Rev. xx. 3.

"That in *the ages to come* he might show the exceeding riches of His grace," etc., conveys the same idea, and may be taken as conclusive evidence that the world was to continue to exist for a very long period subsequent to the time then present.

Such passages as, "Now once *in the end of the world* hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself;"[1] "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath *in these last days* spoken unto us by His Son;"[2] "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest *in these last times* for you,"[3]—such passages were evidently meant to convey no other idea than that they had entered upon the last dispensation of the Church. "Scoffers," such as St. Peter speaks of, may ask, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation;" but they must be reminded that while, according to the same apostle, they are now living in "the last days," and the last of which, he says, "will come as a thief in the night," "they are ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," and that they have no ground, therefore, arising from the supposed delay, for thinking that "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" will never come, nor that "the Lord is slack concerning His promise"[4] in reference thereto. Let such persons not forget, moreover, that the *last day* with them may be the present.

How long the Christian dispensation, or the dispensation of the Spirit, is destined to last no man knows, no, "nor the angels which are in heaven." A Dr. Cumming may think himself endowed with sufficient wisdom to interpret and

[1] Heb. ix. 27. [2] Heb. i. 2. [3] 1 Pet. i. 20. [4] 2 Pet. iii. 3–10.

count the prophetic numbers which embrace the various epochs of the last period of the world's history, but at this innocent conceit the world will doubtless continue to smile until the day arrive when, putting on a graver aspect, they will have it to say, "The good old Doctor is dead, but, contrary to his oft repeated predictions, Christ in person still occupies His mediatorial throne in the heavens, and the world still lives![1] Yes, and live it will until the times and the seasons which God "hath put in His own power" shall have run their appointed course,—until the leaven of divine truth, the seeds of which were sown by the Son of God, shall have fully performed its destined work. "The number" of those who through the influence of God's converting grace, shall constitute "the elect," is no less surely than steadily advancing towards completion. Every day adds to the number, and every day therefore brings us nearer to the approaching end, when, "the number of the elect being accomplished," a new order of things, in accordance with the terms of prophecy, will immediately succeed.

"Our principles of positive science," says Renan, "are offended by the dreams contained in the programme of Jesus. We know the history of the earth; cosmical revolutions of the kind which Jesus expected are only produced by geological or astronomical causes, the connection of which with spiritual things has never yet been demonstrated."[2] That "cosmical revolutions" are connected with a spiritual Being—that is, with God—and that geological and astronomical causes are but secondary and subordinate to the one great Cause of all, no person, we presume, of ordinary reason and judgment will deny. But

[1] We have not seen any of the Doctor's writings, but according to newspaper report such is his doctrine. [2] Page 110.

it has been "demonstrated" that this spiritual Being is the Author of the Bible and of revelations contained therein relative to these very "cosmical revolutions" to which M. Renan refers; and further, that these revelations from God expressly assert the connection of such "revolutions" with the providential history and spiritual state of the world; and therefore, whatever may be the secondary means or causes employed, their direct connection with a spiritual Being and with spiritual things is hereby demonstrated. He who has revealed Himself to us as the Author of creation, has likewise declared Himself to be, through the special exercise of His almighty power, the direct Author of such revolutions.

"The physical and physiological sciences," M. Renan further observes, "have shown us that all supernatural visions are illusions. Jesus had no visions. God did not speak to Him as to one outside of Himself; God was in Him."[1] Very true; Deity's fulness was in Him and interwoven with Him, for He was God Himself—"Christ the wisdom of God, the power of God, and the fulness of God." But as to the assertion, based on the discoveries of science, that "all supernatural visions are illusions," this will, doubtless, strike the Christian man of science as something new to him. Science has made wonderful discoveries, truly; but if this scientific gentleman has given any attention to the science of philology and to the study of the English tongue, he may, perhaps, have discovered that the little word *all* in our language is a comprehensive term—much too comprehensive, we can assure him, to be employed as a qualifying word to the term "visions" in this connection. *All* visions illusory, indeed! and science the revealer of the startling fact! But if science had a tongue, we think it

[1] Page 81.

more than probable that she would inform her misguided devotee that he is wanting to give her credit for much more than she can legitimately claim. Medical and scientific knowledge is now so generally diffused that there can be few who are not aware that in cases of peculiar physical disorder, illusions both of the eye and of the ear are not only possible but common; but to confound these with the visions and prophetic revelations of Holy Scripture were to regard as one and the same things which have not the most distant analogy. To make such illogical and far-fetched comparisons as M. Renan here makes is simply to sacrifice the noble faculty of reason on the inglorious shrine of a scientific hobby.

In reference to the undoubted agreement between all true science and revelation, Dr. M. Raymond has some very pertinent remarks. He says: "Concerning this alleged antagonism between science and revelation, we have to say—First. The evidences of the truth of Christianity are too many and too weighty to be disposed of lightly. This bush has been on fire for thousands of years, and yet its leaf is green and its fruit is fair. The Bible has been tested by the most thorough investigation a malignant opposition could devise, and we affirm that as yet its testimony is unimpeached. Second. Though the peculiar doctrines of Christianity be left out of account, the Bible remains, claiming an unchallenged supremacy in the purity, perspicuity, and practicability of its Theistic teachings. Third. Before it can be consistently allowed that in any specific case science contradicts the Bible, the testimony of science in respect to that particular must be unquestionable; all scientific men must be agreed that the testimony is indubitable; the case must be one of certainty; no mere theory, no partial induction,

no speculation, but an undisputed fact—truth above controversy. Moreover, it is logically fair to claim in this case not only that scientists agree and affirm a conviction of certainty, but also that the case be such that, when announced, the common mind be competent to apprehend the evidence, and to test the conclusiveness of the arguments involved.

"It is manifest that no such case exists, and that therefore it may be fairly affirmed that no antagonism exists between science and revelation."

Objections to the Mosaic account of the Creation, as based on the science of Geology, for example, are of little weight, since Geologists of equal eminence disagree on the subject. "Besides, two things are assumed in the objection without any proof: 1. That the primitive strata were not *created* in their present composite form: 2. That if progressively formed, the processes were always as slow as at present; neither of which can be proved. The science of Geology is too imperfectly known to be the basis of any very confident argument; and the formations which they would account for by natural process, might be at first effected *supernaturally;* or there might be circumstances then existing to render natural processes, if such they were, much more rapid than they assume them to have been."

There is no branch of science in which errors of induction, as based on the law of uniformity, have been more rife than Geology. "Before we press the argument of uniformity," says Dr. Thornton, "we must be sure that the uniformity really exists. Otherwise we shall make cause disproportionate to effect, or effect to cause." And he points to the fact, that "though certain physical changes take place at a certain rate, and in a particular direction, yet it is a fallacy of supposed uniformity, to imagine they must

always have done so, under possibly widely different circumstances. A number of facts having been carefully and patiently accumulated, Geologists proceeded to their induction, and arrived, as they thought, at irrefragable universals, incompatible with the truth of the Scripture narrative. But their store of facts was not exhaustive. Some new and unexpected discovery has completely modified a proposition, once regarded as almost axiomatic. I need only refer . . . to the declaration of one of its most eminent professors, that the whole science must be remodelled."

Speaking of the ancient Hebrews, Renan says: "Besides its priests, each wandering tribe had its *nabi* or prophet, a sort of living oracle who was consulted for the solution of obscure questions supposed to require a high degree of *clairvoyance*."[1] M. Renan displays his characteristic discrimination here truly, as also he does where he represents the same "oracles" as answering to a state of insanity.[2] But intelligent, sensible people such as he, in different parts of his work, has represented the Jews to be, were not wont to consult *insanity* as an "oracle" for the solution of obscure questions. And had he consulted the writings of the prophets with that degree of attention that the importance of a question of this nature demands, he might have discovered that the prophets were consulted by the judges and rulers of Israel "for the solution of questions" which were very far from being "obscure"—that the God of the nation employed them in revealing to His people, in all but numberless instances, His mind and will relative to their government and duties as a nation specially chosen of God to accomplish a special purpose, and also with regard to their struggles, or other intercourse, with surrounding nations. Had he read them with the attention that he represents Jesus as having

[1] Page 38. [2] Pages 307—308.

done, and inherited a larger share of the superior wisdom which he asserts Him to have been the possessor of, or had he applied with meekness and humility to the God of his life for a degree of that "wisdom which is from above," he would, probably, after having seriously and candidly consulted "the prophets," have understood them more in consonance with the light in which he tells us Jesus understood them. His remarks on this point, as given upon pages 56, 57, are the following :—

"The perusal of the books of the Old Testament made much impression upon Him. The canon of the holy books was composed of two principal parts—the Law, that is to say, the Pentateuch, and the Prophets, such as we now possess them . . . The religious lyrics of the Psalms were in marvellous accordance with His poetic soul; they were all His life, His food, and sustenance. The prophets—Isaiah in particular, and his successor in the record of the time of the captivity—with their brilliant dreams of the future, their impetuous eloquence, and their invectives mingled with enchanting pictures, were His true teachers. Jesus participated in the taste which every one had for allegorical interpretations. But the true poetry of the Bible, which escaped the puerile exigetists of Jerusalem, was fully revealed to His grand genius."[1] Yes, Renan, you are right here. "The true poetry of the Bible" was indeed "fully revealed" to Him; but He recognised in it what, unhappily, you fail to recognise, viz., that the true poetry of the Bible arose from the Divinity of its diction—that the matter and composition of the Bible was not merely human, but that those holy men of God, the prophets, wrote and spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, as He said also of His inspired Apostles: "It is not ye that speak, but the

[1] Page 196.

Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Nor was the inspiration of the Jewish Prophets the mere inspiration of the *clairvoyant*, as you weakly imagine. The Holy Seers (clairvoyants, if you prefer the term) of the past dispensation of the Church were connected with the influence and agency of the Holy Spirit of God, which is clearly evinced by their personal and prophetic character, doctrine, and works.

In speaking of another matter, Renan says, "The greatest miracle would have been His refusal to perform any; never would the laws of history and popular psychology have suffered so great a derogation."[1] But surely it would be a psychological phenomenon equally great if all the revelations of the Old Testament prophets were traceable to a peculiar but purely natural state of the mental organization. But Renan's remarks in reference to the Jewish prophets being in "*a high state of clairvoyance*" when officiating as the oracles of the nation, intimate as much. The powers and capabilities of man's being are great, no doubt, but certainly not sufficiently so to account for even one of the prophetic revelations of the Old Testament Scriptures. They are obviously altogether beyond the ken of mortal mind. He who alone hath in Himself immortality could make known such things to men as are revealed to us in the Scriptures. Extending beyond the natural world, therefore, we must necessarily enter the domain of the supernatural for a satisfactory solution of spiritual and prophetic phenomena.

We may here further observe for the edification of the school to which our philosopher belongs, that it is well known among those who are conversant with the philosophic and practical principles of psychology—otherwise

[1] Page 196.

called spiritual science, or the science of the soul—it is well known to such that the "high state of clairvoyance" of which M. Renan speaks, requires for its practical development a subject having a peculiarly constructed brain, usually, if not invariably, accompanied by a weakly physical constitution, and a more or less delicate state of the general health.[1] But those who have read the Scripture history of the Jewish prophets, must know that they were men who were very far from answering to this description of clairvoyant. They were not delicate weakly females, with brains having a peculiarity of construction differing from the generality of mankind, such as are chosen by mesmerizers as subjects most susceptible of mesmeric influence, and more especially for the peculiar developments of internal or spiritual vision called "clairvoyance." Many of them, at least, were strong robust men, as is evident from what is written of them.

But again, clairvoyants, it must be remembered, are but mediums operated upon. They invariably require a mesmerizer, a man of superior mental and physical power, to put them into the mesmeric and clairvoyant states. To bring the patient into these states. after the "sleep" is induced, manipulations, or passes, are usually necessary, but in some cases the mere volition of the operator is sufficient. It is thus through the physical energy and volition of another that the state of the clairvoyant is invariably induced.

The singular condition and remarkable developments of the clairvoyant are a phenomenon in connection with man's mental and physical constitution which is, as yet, but little understood even by those who have made it the subject of their study and experimental observation for years. But

[1] See J. Haddock, M.D., on "Somnolism and Psycheism," published in London, England.

if the practical experiments which have been made with clairvoyants demonstrate anything, it is, that the human spirit is susceptible of spiritual impressions from contact with a separate spiritual existence, or when brought within the range of a separate spiritual influence intelligently exercised; that the intervention of opaque bodies is no impediment to true spiritual vision; and that under certain conditions of physical organization this state may be measurably induced by the mental and magnetic power of a human agent. Suppose, then, that the state of God's prophets, under certain circumstances, were something analagous to that of the clairvoyant, the question would then arise, By what agency were they brought into this state? It must necessarily be referable to a higher mental and spiritual organization and power than their own. Whether or not then the state by which their spiritual ears were opened, and their spiritual vision awakened, were a state akin to that by which the clairvoyant spiritually sees and hears, need be a matter of no concern to us; the fact that a superior agency was indispensable to the bringing of them into the prophetic state, taken in connection with *the character and verification* of the revelations made, is demonstrative evidence that the agency under whose influence they prophesied, and by the exercise of whose power they wrote and spoke, must have have been supernatural, must have been Divine.

By some law of our being, not well understood, it is well known that even the feelings and thoughts of the operator may be transmitted to the clairvoyant, and that those thoughts are given expression to by the "patient" at the volition of the operator's will. And just so was it with the holy prophets: they gave expression to the thoughts

passing through the mind of the Infinite, by Whose influence brought to bear upon their minds they spoke and prophesied. Whether impressed on their minds through the medium of a natural law, however, or otherwise, is altogether aside from the question. The visions, etc., of the prophets were supernaturally impressed, since they were effected by a supernatural Being—the great Author of nature, and supreme Controller of its laws.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL, THE MORAL LAW, AND NECESSARY LIMITS TO THE EXERCISE OF BELIEVING PRAYER.

SPEAKING of the Jewish expectation of the Messiah, and of a strong desire entertained in connection therewith for "a revolution which should shake the world to its very foundation," as "being necessary in order to satisfy the enormous thirst for vengeance excited in the Jewish nation by the sense of its superiority, and by the sight of its humiliation," Renan says: "If Israel had possessed the spiritualistic doctrine which divides man into two parts — the body and the soul — and finds it quite natural that while the body decays, the soul should survive, this paroxysm of rage and energetic protestation would have had no existence. But such a doctrine, proceeding from the Grecian philosophy, was not in the traditions of the Jewish mind."[1] And on the next page but one, he adds: "The resurrection is an idea totally different from that of the immortality of the soul. The Sadducee, who did not believe in it, was, in reality, faithful to the old Jewish doctrine; it was the Pharisee, the believer in the resurrection, who was the innovator." Now, allow me to say that M. Renan's sources of information on this point must have been unreliable; for these statements are not true—no more

[1] Page 66.

true, indeed, than are the two contradictory statements which he makes in different parts of his work relative to who were the "true Jews." On page 242, in speaking of the Sadducees, he says: "It was these unbelievers who, denying the resurrection, *were the true Jews*." And on page 231 he flatly contradicts himself by saying: "Now, the Pharisees *were the true Jews* — the nerve and sinew of Judaism." The reader will observe that we merely expose such of the flagrant inconsistencies and contradictions of M. Renan's work as are directly connected with the discussion of such points as we have deemed sufficiently important to notice. And, perhaps, we should have passed even these silently over, had not M. Renan been pleased to publish to the world the gratuitous assertion, that, in his judgment—that is to say, according to the dusky light in which he is enabled to view them—"the Gospels contain contradictions."

But to return to the consideration of the soul's immortality and the resurrection, we would remark, with all due deference to the learned gentleman who has entertained a contrary opinion, that by the entire body of the Jewish nation, the Sadducees excepted, these doctrines were received as leading articles of their religion. If they neither believed in the resurrection nor in the immortality of the soul, if they were not taught these doctrines by the Jewish writings and traditions, whence came the account given in the Bible of the appearance to Saul of the spirit of Samuel? And whence originated the ground for the Apostle's declaration: "Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto *this nation*, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself. . . . But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy,

so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: and have hope toward God, *which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead*, both of the just and unjust?"[1] Whence, moreover, among many others of similar doctrinal import, came such passages as the following:—

"There is *a spirit* in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth it understanding.[2] For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away *his soul*?[3] If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? So man lieth down and riseth not: *till the heavens be no more*, they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep.[4] For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand in the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, *yet in my flesh shall I see God:* Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold."[5] Psalms:—"But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then understood I their end*.[6] The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment.[7] The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.[8] So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.[9] I

[1] Acts xxiv. 10–14. [2] Job xxxii. 8. [3] xxvi. 8. [4] xiv. 10–14. [5] xix. 25, 27. [6] Psalm lxxiii. 13–23. [7] i. 5. [8] ix. 17. [9] xc. 12.

had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give *grace and glory;* no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.[1] As for me I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.[2] Thou wilt shew me the path of life: *in Thy presence is fulness of joy;* at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.[3] The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for He seeth that *his day is coming.* Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.[4] Precious in the sight of God is the death of His saints.[5] Into Thine hand I commit *my spirit:* Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.[6] Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and *afterwards receive me to glory.* My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."[7] Proverbs:—"The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous *hath hope in his death.*[8] For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He pondereth all his goings.[9] How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at My reproof. Because I have called, and ye refused; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.[10] If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth

[1] Psalm lxxxiv. 10, 11. [2] xvii. 15. [3] xvi. 11. [4] xxxvii. 12, 13, 37. [5] cxvi. 15. [6] xxxi. 5. [7] lxxiii. 24-26. [8] Prov. xiv. 32. [9] v. 21. [10] i. 22-27.

not He that pondereth the heart consider it? and He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it? and *shall not He render to every man according to his works?*" [1] Ecclesiastes:—"There is no man that hath power over the spirit to *retain the spirit.* Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and his day be prolonged, yet surely *I know that it shall be well with them that fear God.*[2] Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things *God will bring thee into judgment.*[3] Then shall the dust return to earth as it was; and *the spirit* shall return unto God Who gave it. Fear God, and keep His commandments: *for God shall bring every work into judgment*, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."[4] Isaiah:—"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near.[5] Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but My salvation *shall be for ever.*[6] The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall *dwell with everlasting burnings?*"[7] Jeremiah:—"I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give *every man according to his ways*, and according to the fruit of his doings."[8] Ezekiel:—"Why will ye die, O house of Israel? For *I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth*, saith

[1] Prov. xxiv. 12. [2] Eccles. viii. 8–12. [3] xi. 9. [4] xii. 7, 13, 14.
[5] Isa. lv. 6. [6] li. 6. [7] xxxiii. 14. [8] Jer. xvii. 10.

the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye."[1] Daniel:—"And of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, some shall *awake to everlasting life*, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars *for ever and ever*. But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. . . . But go thou thy way *till the end be;* for thou shalt rest, and *stand in thy lot at the end of the days.*"[2] Hosea:—"I will *ransom them from the power of the grave;* I will redeem them from death."[3] Malachi:—"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, *in that day when I make up my jewels;* and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not."[4]

In view of the foregoing indisputable proof, texts quoted from the inspired records of the ancient Jewish nation, it is plain that the Jews were taught by their writings to believe not only in the immortality of the soul and a future state of rewards and punishments, but also in the resurrection of the body; and well, therefore, might our Lord reply to the Sadducees, who "say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit,"[5] "Ye do err, *not knowing the Scriptures*, nor the power of God. But as touching the resurrection of

[1] Ezek. xviii. 32. [2] Dan. xii. 2–4, 13. [3] Hos. xiii. 14.
[4] Mal. iii. 16–18. [5] Acts xxiii. 8.

the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."[1]

But, says Renan, "Jesus was not a spiritualist, for to Him everything tended to a palpable realization; He had not the least notion of a soul separated from the body."[2] This groundless assertion is sufficiently refuted by the passage just quoted; for "God," Jesus said, "is not the God of the dead"—not of those who have ceased to exist, or who have lost all consciousness of existence in death—"but of the living." But hundreds of years after they had slept the sleep of death and been "gathered to their fathers," God said, I *am* the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; and according to Christ's own words therefore, it would appear that they must necessarily have had an existence when these words were uttered. They could not have been dead in the sense of an utter extinction of conscious being, for God, he says, "is not the God of the dead, but of the living." This view of the passage is further confirmed by our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus. It is obvious that Christ could have no other design in His teaching by parable than the teaching of doctrine; and the doctrine clearly inculcated in this parable is, that at death the soul immediately enters either a place of happiness or of misery; for while the poor Israelite is represented as having been taken to Abraham's bosom—Abraham existing in a state of happiness—and the rich man, as having lifted up his eyes in hell where he exists in a state of torment, the relatives of the latter are represented as *still living upon the earth*, still having Moses and the prophets for their instructors, and still therefore in

[1] Matt. xxii. 29-32. [2] Page 113.

a state of probation and within the reach of mercy.[1] It is beyond dispute, then, that Christ herein plainly teaches the doctrine of the soul's existence in a state of separation from the body. And hence also it is that we read of the conversation which He held upon the mount of transfiguration with Elias, and with Moses, whose body had been buried and long before reduced to its original dust.

Our Lord's promise to the thief upon the Cross proves the same doctrine:—"This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."[2] Now on that day the body of the crucified malefactor was consigned to the grave. The promise, therefore, must have related to the soul in its separate state. Another incontrovertible proof is our Lord's exhortation to His disciples to "fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul."[3] Stronger proof of the doctrine in question than is afforded by this passage would seem impossible. Men may "kill the body," Christ tells us, but they cannot "kill the soul;" thus making them two distinct things, one of which cannot be reached by mortal weapon, and retains its existence independent of the other. Luke's addition to this passage is, "I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell."

It is plain, then, that the soul of man is of such a nature that, as St. Paul also assures us, it may be absent from the body and still consciously exist. "To be absent from the body," he tells the true believer, "is to be present with the Lord."[4] This is in perfect agreement with the teaching of Christ; and it is not true, therefore, as Renan says, that "Jesus had not the least notion of a soul separated from the body."

Presuming to sit in judgment on our Lord's manner of

[1] Luke xvi. 19–31. [2] Luke xxiii. 43. [3] Matt. x. 28. [4] 2 Cor. v. 8.

conducting Himself upon certain public occasions, M. Renan says: "His harmonious genius was wasted in insipid argumentations upon the law and the prophets. He lent Himself with a condescension we cannot but regret, to the captious criticisms to which the merciless cavillers subjected Him."[1] But why so? Why does M. Renan express such regret? The answer may be gathered from his references for illustration, which are Matthew xxii. 36 and following, and verse 42 and following, in one of which Christ appropriates to Himself a passage from the 110th Psalm in proof of His Divinity; and in the other, He asserts the Divine origin of the Old Testament Scriptures by affirming in answer to the question, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" that on the two great *commandments* of love to God and our neighbour *hang all the law and the prophets.* This then, is the objectionable part of our Lord's conversation with the Pharisees; and this is why it has proved so offensive to the refined taste of Monsieur Renan.

The moral law Jesus declares to be the law of God; but M. Renan is pleased to differ with Him, and on page 40 pronounces it the work of man—"the work of men penetrated with a high ideal of the present life, and believing that they had found the best means of realizing it." Christ also asserts that man can do nothing in the way of keeping this law according to its true spirit, without Him; thus asserting at once M. Renan's moral impotency, and His own Omnipotence, or Divinity, at which, being very humiliating to the gentleman's self-righteousness, he also takes decided umbrage. The law, as explained by Jesus, is doubtless also too perfect for him—too perfect even for him—for Jesus literally epitomizes it into the Law of

[1] Page 241.

Paradise, the law of perfect obedience and love. We may here observe that this law merely specifies the particulars of that moral law which was always binding on man as a creature related to his Creator, and constituted by Him a rational, intelligent, and free moral agent. It was written at first, not upon tables of stone, but upon the table of man's heart. Every particular in the Decalogue or ten commandments, therefore, both as regards our duty to God and to one another, would have been kept, even though they had not been thus particularized, had man retained his primitive innocency. The moral law being thus adapted to man's nature when in a state of pristine perfection, it was brought in by Moses, and its spiritual nature explained by Jesus, to show, in part, what God required of perfect humanity—of man as he came from the hands of his Maker, and between whose unsullied nature and the perfect law there was therefore *then* a perfect adaptability. By the introduction of this law, then, as the Apostle tells us, is "the knowledge of sin;" the knowledge that by a comparison of man's moral conduct with the standard of requirement, we are enabled to discover that sin has entered the world, that man has become a fallen, guilty creature.

All repugnant enough to the Pharisaic and self-righteous, no doubt; but hence follows also the beautiful adaptability, through grace, of the atonement of Christ to man's present condition. Man having broken the law needs a Saviour; for it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." And he that offends or breaks the law though only "in one point," is in one sense "guilty of all;" for he thereby snaps the chain of perfect obedience and righteousness by which alone he could be justified. One link broken

in the chain which holds the ship to her moorings as effectually casts her adrift as if every link in the chain were broken; and so, by breaking one link in the chain of commandments, the transgressor as effectually separates himself from the favour of God as though he had broken the whole. By snapping the one link he in effect breaks the entire chain, and casts himself utterly adrift.

But although we have all thus violated the holy law of God, as embodied in the Ten Commandments, and the whole world thereby become guilty before Him—through the abounding mercy of God, we may yet be freely justified by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, Christ having redeemed us from the curse of the broken law, "being made a curse for us." He who knew no sin was made a sin-offering for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him; so that through the atonement thus provided in the sacrifice of His Son, God can now be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. And being thus "made free from the law of sin and death"—free from the penalty of the law which convicts us of sin and death—we become servants to God, bear fruit unto holiness, and the end to every true believer is "everlasting life." Let us, then, be grateful to our Father in heaven for having thus pitied our fallen condition, and provided so suitable a remedy. Why should we be rebellious still? Why should we longer live in a state of sin and condemnation, since it is written, "He hath borne our sins and carried our griefs for us, and that there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit"? Arise, then, fellow-sinner, arise, if consciously oppressed with guilt and sin, and with the true humility of the prodigal go to thy Father and

say, "I have sinned, and am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of Thy hired servants," and see if He will not with Fatherly love receive thee with open arms, and bid thee, through Christ, "go in peace and sin no more." A child-like faith and confidence in the word and promise of God will instantly remove all sense of condemnation; and "walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit" will be the means of our retaining an assurance and a consciousness of our election unto eternal life. A continued hungering and thirsting after righteousness, a constant longing after entire conformity to the image and will of God in all things, will be the means, moreover, of filling the soul with a degree of heavenly peace, love, and joy, of which the unbelieving world knows absolutely nothing, and compared to which their joys are but passing, unsubstantial shadows. It will also enable the believer to meet his last enemy, death, in triumphant anticipation of an immediate entrance into the kingdom of glory, where, met by its King, he shall hear from His own lips the well-known but heart-thrilling words, "Come in, ye blessed of My Father, come in, to go no more out for ever!" Who would not aspire to this—to such a greeting from heaven's great King as an introductory to a state of blessedness which shall know no end, rather than to the ephemeral, fading glories of earth?

But the trouble is "all men have not faith." In condemnation of a faithless, unbelieving people, Jesus exclaims, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!"[1] And, sad to relate, Renan, poor, talented, unbelieving Renan, is among the number. "Learn of Me," said Jesus. Has M. Renan learnt of Him? Oh, no; for if he had he would not have been "so slow to believe" what

[1] Matthew xxiii. 37.

the prophets have said; he would, like Jesus, have unhesitatingly believed Moses and the prophets. But the Law of Moses is holy, pure, and perfect, and he does not like it. And the prophets tell him that he has a deceitful heart and one that is "desperately wicked," and he winces at the idea. But in thus doing he but proves the prophets' words true, who knowing, by the inspiration of God, man's native blindness to his heart's inherent wickedness and deceit, exclaims, "Who can know it?" Who can know it? Not certainly the self-righteous one who, ignoring man's fall in Adam, and inherited corruption through him, thinks himself naturally pure and good; or, if not exactly perfect in purity, thinks himself able to put the finishing stroke to God's handiwork and perfect it for Him—not the man whose pride of virtue, pride of intellect, and pride of innate all-sufficient moral power, leads him to reject all the fundamental, vital, and saving doctrines of Holy Scripture. No, not to such a man is it given to understand and know his own heart; this wisdom is, by the decree of God, reserved for the humble, the lowly, and the contrite, while he who, through the pomp of position, pride of intellect, or from any other cause, trusts to his own heart, the Scriptures assure us, is a "fool." And Jesus, tender and loving, meek and lowly, as He is, nevertheless in the following words pronounces the doom of all such as are not only thus deceived themselves, but who, assuming the character of "blind leaders of the blind," seek to lead others into the same whirlpool of sin and destruction: "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte."—How much sea and land has philosopher Renan compassed between Paris and Jerusalem, with a view to making proselytes to his visionary theories?—"ye compass

sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves."[1]

Had M. Renan taken the sensible view of "the Law of Moses" that a converted infidel in America took, instead of being a "blind guide," he might have been a bright ornament to the Church of Christ, and, dying, after having "turned many to righteousness," found himself among the number who are destined to "shine as the stars in the firmament of heaven for ever:"—

"In a neat and beautiful city in one of the northern states of the American republic lived a lawyer of eminence and talent. I was not informed as to the particulars of his moral character, but he was notoriously profane. One day he met an elder of the Presbyterian Church, who was also a lawyer, and said to him, 'I wish, sir, to examine into the truth of the Christian religion; what books would you advise me to read on the evidences of Christianity?' The elder, surprised at the inquiry, replied, 'That is a question, sir, which you ought to have settled long ago. You ought not to have put off a subject so important to this late period of life.' 'It is too late,' said the inquirer. 'I never knew much about it, but I always supposed that Christianity was rejected by the great majority of learned men. I intend, however, now to examine the subject thoroughly myself. I have now upon me, as my physician says, a mortal disease, under which I may live a year and a half or two years, but not probably longer. What books, sir, would you advise me to read?' 'The Bible,' said the elder. 'I believe you do not understand me,' resumed the unbeliever, surprised in his turn. 'I wish to investigate the truth of the Bible.' 'I would advise you, sir,' repeated the elder, 'to read the

[1] Matthew xxiii. 15.

Bible. And,' he continued, 'I will give you my reasons. Most infidels are very ignorant of the Scriptures. Now to reason on any subject with correctness we must understand what it is about which we reason. In the next place I consider the internal evidence of the truth of the Scriptures stronger than the external.' 'And where shall I begin?' inquired the unbeliever. 'At the New Testament?' 'No,' said the elder, 'at the beginning, at Genesis.' The infidel bought a commentary, went home, and sat down to the serious study of the Scriptures. He applied all his strong and well-disciplined powers of mind to the Bible, to try rigidly, but impartially, its truth. As he went on in the perusal he received occasional calls from the elder. The infidel freely remarked upon what he had read, and stated his objections. He liked *this* passage, he thought *that* touching and beautiful, but he could not credit a third.

"One evening the elder called and found the unbeliever at his office, walking the room with a dejected look, his mind apparently absorbed in thought. He continued, not noticing that any one had come in, busily to trace and retrace his steps. The elder at length spoke. 'You seem, sir,' said he, 'to be in a brown study. Of what are you thinking?' 'I have been reading,' replied the infidel, 'the moral law.' 'Well, what do you think of it?' asked the elder. 'I will tell you what I used to think,' he answered; 'I supposed that Moses was the leader of a horde of banditti, that having a strong mind he acquired great influence over superstitious people, and that on Mount Sinai he played off some sort of fire-works to the amazement of his ignorant followers, who imagined in their mingled fear and superstition that the exhibition was supernatural.' 'But what do you think now?' interposed the elder. 'I have been

looking,' said the infidel, 'into the nature of that law. I have been trying to see whether I can add anything to it, or take anything from it, so as to make it better. Sir, I cannot. It is perfect. The first commandment,' continued he, 'directs us to make the Creator the object of our supreme love and reverence. That is right. If He be our Creator, Preserver, and supreme Benefactor, we ought to treat Him and none other as such. The second forbids idolatry; that is certainly right. The third forbids profaneness; the fourth fixes a time for religious worship. If there be a God, He ought surely to be worshipped. It is suitable that there should be an outward homage significant of our inward regard. If God be worshipped, it is proper that some time should be set apart for that purpose, when all may worship Him harmoniously and without interruption. One day in seven is certainly not too much, and I do not know that it is too little. The fifth defines the peculiar duties arising from the family relations. Injuries to our neighbours are then classified by the moral law. They are divided into offences against life, chastity, property, and character. And,' said he, applying a legal idea with legal acuteness, 'I notice that the greatest offence in each class is expressly forbidden. Thus the greatest injury to life is murder; to chastity, adultery; to property, theft; to character, perjury. Now the greater offence must include the less of the same kind: murder must include every injury to life, adultery every injury to purity, and so of the rest. And the moral code is closed and perfected by a command forbidding every improper desire in regard to our neighbour. I have been thinking,' he proceeded, 'Where did Moses get that law? I have read history. The Egyptians and the adjacent nations were idolaters, and the wisest and best

Greeks and Romans never gave a code of morals like this. Where did Moses get this law which surpasses the wisdom and philosophy of the most enlightened ages? He lived at a period comparatively barbarous, but he has given a law in which the learning and sagacity of all subsequent time can detect no flaw. Where did he get it? He could not have soared so far above his age as to have devised it himself. I am satisfied where he obtained it. It came down from heaven. I am convinced of the truth of the religion of the Bible!'

"The infidel—infidel no longer—remained to his death a firm beliver in the truth of Christianity. He lived about three years after this conversation. He continued to pursue the study of the Bible, his views of the Christian religion expanding and growing more and more correct. Profaneness was abandoned; an oath was now as offensive to him as it was familiar before. When his former gay companions used one he habitually reproved them; he remonstrated with them upon its folly and want of meaning, and said that he could never before imagine how painful profane language must be to a Christian."

Allow me, in proof of the Divine origin of the Holy Scriptures, to add to the testimony of this learned *Advocate* a brief but most conclusive, and, to every candid reader, most convincing argument, as given by the Rev. John Wesley, M.A. He says: "I beg leave to propose a short, clear, and strong argument to prove the Divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The Bible must be the invention of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God. It could not be the invention of good men or angels, for they neither would nor could make a book and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, 'Thus saith the Lord,'

when it was their own invention. It could not be the invention of bad men or devils, for they would not make a book which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell to all eternity. I therefore draw this conclusion, that the Bible must have been given by Divine inspiration."

Such reasoning, conclusive and unanswerable as it is, however, is not, it appears, sufficiently so to meet the attestative requirements of the presumptuously dictatorial schools of M. Renan, Professor Tyndall, and others—the former of whom, as we have seen, in attestation of the supernatural, would see a miracle performed upon a corpse in presence of a select company of scientific gentlemen; while the latter would see one performed on behalf of the afflicted living within the walls of an hospital. Allow me, in this connection, to briefly refer to this professor's proposal to the Christian Church. By way of *experiment*—of which he is curiously fond, as he is accustomed to that sort of thing in his professional vocation—he would have the Church offer prayer for the miraculous cure of the inmates of a certain hospital. Now, the proposal of this modern *sign-seeker* is not altogether a novel one, as some might suppose; it had its counterpart, as to dictatorial and vain curiosity, among the wonder-loving sign-seekers who existed in the time of our Lord. For a suitable reply to it, therefore—a reply that shall be in accordance with the mind of God, we must consult Christ Himself on the subject, and learn of Him. Herod, the tetrarch of Lower Galilee, it appears, was curiously desirous of seeing a miracle performed by Jesus;[1] but notwithstanding his eagerness of desire, Jesus did not gratify his curiosity. And when the curious Scribes and Pharisees asked a miraculous sign from

[1] Luke xxiii. 8.

Him, He replied, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and *there shall no sign be given to it*" (in gratification of mere sight-seeing, wonder-loving inquisitiveness), but referred their credence to a miraculous sign that had been performed in a bygone age, and which had been duly recorded in God's book, the Bible.[1] And to the miracles contained in this Book, including the New Testament, therefore, in imitation of Christ in such a case, the Christian Church must refer the "evil and adulterous generation" of the present day. Inquisitive sceptical "professors" of our time are to be regarded with the same degree of deference by the Church as they were by Christ, in similar circumstances, in His day, and no more so. "*There shall no sign be given* YOU of the nature you ask, but those which are recorded in that Divinely authenticated book, the Bible," must be the Church's prompt and unhesitating reply to such men.

God's mind on this, as on all other subjects, is to-day, yesterday, and for ever the same. Were the Church to take steps towards complying with the demand of Professor Tyndall, it would not be following Christ's example in such a case, and would therefore, without doubt, be doomed to disappointment. The Church could not rationally act faith for the accomplishment of such a work, for the plain reason that they have no Scriptural ground for it, but rather the opposite, as set forth in the precedent afforded us by Jesus Himself. And as we are not warranted to expect anything we ask, except as it shall prove to be in accordance with the Divine will, it would be the height of presumption and folly for the Church to attempt to pray and believe for such a manifestation of the Divine power. The age of special and extraordinary miraculous attestation passed away with the

[1] Matt. xii. 39.

introduction and early establishment of the Gospel dispensation. But in view of the precedent before them, the Apostles themselves, doubtless, neither would nor could have wrought a miracle simply to gratify the sceptical curiosity of an avowed unbeliever. God's dispensations and plans of operation are not man's; neither is He to be dictated to by man. He will do all His pleasure, but cannot be supposed, at the unbelieving request of curious and vain man, to do anything contrary to His expressed will, as taught us by the example of Christ.

But suppose it were possible for the Church in its collective capacity to *believingly* present such a petition before the throne of grace in the name of Christ, and that it were graciously accepted and answered, what effect religiously would it have upon the hearts and minds of such men as Professors Tyndall and Renan? What effect did the performance of miracle in evidence of the Divinity of our religion have upon the mind of their brethren the Pharisees of our Lord's day? They witnessed the unanswerable testimony of such works, acknowledged them to be notable miracles, but remained as to the special object of Christ's mission and their own natural condition, in unbelief, darkness, and spiritual death, still. Are we then to suppose that human nature in its unregenerate state is any more open to conviction now than it was in Christ's day? Certainly not. It is clear, then, that as unbelief, or a rejection of Divine testimony to the truth of our holy religion, was not from the want of indisputable evidence in the case of the Jews, so any amount of evidence, however unquestionably miraculous in its nature, would, in like manner, in our day be equally ineffective in producing that degree and kind of conviction in the minds of those who are "dead in trespasses and sins," which, independent of

the supernatural influence of the Spirit, would lead them to cordially embrace the truth, repent of their sins, and accept of Christ as their Saviour.

We conclude that they would not thus believe, not only because the Jews as a nation did not, but because also Jesus assures us that miracle, as distinct from the Divine influence accompanying the truth itself, would not be thus effective: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."[1] If such men hear not "Moses and the prophets," or, in other words, the Scriptures, the simple and plain reason why they would not be convinced by miracle, or hear and heed the statements made by One risen from the dead is, that God has *purposed* that His Word and Spirit alone shall be the means by which the necessary spiritual light and knowledge shall be communicated to men. His blessing, therefore, accompanies Bible truth, and it alone, as the instrument of bringing men to a knowledge of themselves, of their God, and of eternal realities. And as nothing can be effectual against the purpose of God, we see how utterly impossible it would be, though all hell should arise and go through the earth weeping and wailing, for men to be brought to a *saving* knowledge of the truth through their instrumentality. It would be converting and saving men in a way that is contrary to the declared plan and purpose of God, which is impossible. It *would* furnish them with a head knowledge of things, but from the absence of the Divine power and blessing that attends the Divinely appointed means alone, it would no more move them to genuine repentance and obedience, than it would thus move devils.

[1] Luke xvi. 31.

CHAPTER XVII.

INFIDELS AND INFIDELITY, ROMANISM AND RITUALISM.

ANOTHER of the notable sayings of our French philosopher is the following: "Jesus," he says, "has no more authentic followers than those who seem to deny Him."[1] Deluded man! Those to whom M. Renan refers, not only *seem* to deny Him, but *really* deny Him, and are therefore to be classed with the common stock or family of infidels who are "without God, and without hope in the world," and the general profligacy of whose lives, not denying an occasional virtuous exception, is notorious. This, however, is but the necessary result of their principles. The young and sincere inquirer, therefore, and those who are not blinded and enslaved by habits of immorality and vice, would do well to consider the general character of those who have taken it upon them to write or speak against the truth of the Bible, and to remember that the profligate character of the generality of them, and the general licentiousness of their creed, are presumptive evidence against them, and strongly in favour of the holy cause they oppose.

That such corrupters of society should arise, Peter, inspired by God, foretells us. "There shall come," he says, "in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts."[2] On these lusts, infidels know that the Bible makes war, and hence their "scoffing," or shallow, irrational

[2] 2 Peter iii. 3.

attempts at making war on the Bible. Cecil says of them: "There is nothing in them like sober serious inquiry. They are the wildest fanatics on earth." And after having read Paine's "Age of Reason," a poet wrote on a blank leaf the following stanza:—

> "At every page divine his rancour teems,
> This hour he reasons, and the next blasphemes;
> Marking each text with a censorious eye,
> That gives his practice, or his pride, the lie."

Paine was a man of an ungovernable temper, and a sot. Gibbon was a man of unsteady principles. He did not hesitate to qualify himself for office by partaking of the Lord's Supper in the established Church of England. He was first a Catholic, then a Protestant, and then an infidel, and then again a Protestant. Hobbs maintained that the law of the land was the sole foundation of right and wrong. Godwin, by his own confession, both defended and practised lewdness; and Chesterfield, says Dr. Johnson, "taught the manners of a dancing-master and the morals of a prostitute." Emerson was an habitual and beastly drunkard. And Hume was the unblushing advocate of adultery and suicide. "Deny thyself," was to him a "monkish virtue." Vanity was a leading characteristic of his life, and his vain speculations carried him to such absurd and fanciful lengths as to fully justify the conception entertained of him by the person who inscribed on the circular slab over his grave the following lines:—

> "Beneath this circular *idea*
> Vulgarly called a *tomb*,
> *Impressions* and *ideas* rest,
> Which *constituted* Hume."

Voltaire's temper was violent and ungovernable. He was habitually intoxicated with vanity, was guilty of the sin

of Sodom, and was a man of mean principles. To gain favour, he would profess anything "At London, he was a Freethinker; at Versailles, a Cartesian; at Nancy, a Christian; at Berlin, an Infidel." D'Alembert, at the request of Voltaire, told a palpable falsehood by denying that Voltaire was the author of the Philosophical Dictionary. Rousseau lived a life of infamy, and confessed that as occasion served he was through life both a thief and a liar.

What a phalanx of iniquity is here presented! What a picture of corruption and depravity! Truly it must be a system of iniquity of which such men are the leading moral representatives. There may be exceptions on both sides, but this must be clearly manifest to an honest, reflecting mind, that whilst the true adherents, and particularly the leading defenders of Christianity, are holy and God-like, the adherents and most distinguished exponents and defenders of the principles of infidelity are unholy, un-Christlike, and depraved. The Head Centre of Infidelity, therefore, is the Devil, the bond which surrounds the entire circle is a bond of iniquity, and all will be hurled together, in God's set time, into the place whence it originated.

Is it at all surprising that when such men come to die they frequently exhibit feelings of remorse, and a foreboding dread of coming evil? This was the case in the dying experience of Voltaire and other leading French infidels, as well as in that of Newport and others in England and America. "I am abandoned by God and man," said Voltaire when on his death-bed, and added, "I shall go to hell, and you [addressing his physician] will go with me." Hobbs, who had been tormented with fear, as death approached said, that he was "about to take a leap in the dark." And Newport's last words were, "Oh, the insuffer-

able pangs of hell and damnation!" Miserable, indeed, are the deaths of infidels—a horrible darkness and a dread uncertainty creeping over some of them, while others are in an agony of fear and torment by reason of impending terrible evils which they *then* believe are awaiting them in the next world; while others again, seized with alternate paroxysms of prayer and blasphemy. sometimes cursing the God that made them, and at others hopelessly calling upon Him for help—seem to have the fires of hell enkindled within their agonized bosoms, the remorseful woes of the damned burning to their inmost being, even before they have departed this life and realized what it is to have a personal abode in the regions of unquenchable torment! Not, perhaps, that the inhabitants of that dreadful abode will be literally enveloped with fire and brimstone, although for anything we know, or reason can determine to the contrary, they may be; for they must live in some element, and God can as easily decree that it shall be in an element of "fire and brimstone, vapour of smoke," etc., as in any other. These are the terms, at any rate, by which God has been pleased to designate the condition of the place; and these elements, therefore, the painful effects of which we know, must, in any case, be taken to represent the terrible condition and extreme sufferings of the lost. But if, as in the dreadful death-bed experiences of Voltaire, Newport, and others, the bare beginning of the felt "wrath of God," or a mere conscious approaching of their everlasting torment, is so unbearable to those to whom God, as a warning to the world, gives a glimpse of it in time, what must the full, the ceaseless, the eternal realization be?

But there are exceptions to such deaths; and the infidel Hume is held up as one of them. Hume, say the sceptics,

died like a philosopher. Well, suppose it were allowed that deaths such as his were not merely the exception, but the rule. What would it prove? Why simply this, that the rule is that as a man lives so he dies. If he lives a hardened unbeliever, he dies so. If his conscience, through his habits of unbelief and sin, has been "seared as with a hot iron," so as to put him past all feeling of concern and fear while he lives, about what shall await him in the world to come, by those same habits of thought and feeling, we may judge he will, according to natural principles, be possessed in sickness and death. But suppose the heart of man may become so hard and callous, the conscience so seared through life habits of sin and unbelief, that he may become as stupid as a beast, and actually "die as the beast dieth," without fear of anything beyond the present, is this really dying like a philosopher? If so, if the tendency of philosophy (infidel philosophy, we may say) is to reduce man, however far above it intellectually and otherwise in life, to the level, condition, and feeling of the beast in death, common sense people will not be soon likely to envy the philosopher his philosophy; for they, at least, will be convinced, that the less they have to do with such philosophy the better, the wiser, and the safer, they will be.

But of all the infidels who have thus "died like a beast" as to the future, I have only read of one who has been specially referred to as such, and who has been held up by brother infidels as an example in death worthy of the philosopher's imitation. Hume died like a philosopher, it is said. Well, how did he die? as the philosopher, or "as the fool dieth?" Let us see. Dr. Johnson says of him: "Here was a man who had been at no pains to enquire into the truth of religion, and had continually turned his mind

the other way. It was not to be expected that the prospect of death should alter his way of thinking, unless God should send an angel to set him right. He had a vanity in being thought easy." Dr. Smith tells the world that the close of his life was spent in playing at cards and cracking jokes about Charon and his boat. Admit it—although the respectable female that waited on him gives a very different account of his last hours—but for philosophy's sake, admit it. Here, then, is a man who, according to his own philosophy, is about to fall into an "eternal sleep," a man who, when every tie which mortals usually hold dear was about to be for ever severed, is found stoically engaged, we are given to understand, with a company of his fellow-scoffers, playing at cards and cracking jokes! And this is philosophy! Insane judgment. Philosophy has its origin in nature, and is confined to the natural. Properly understood and applied, it refines and ennobles the feelings, leads to a healthy development of human nature, and, according to the state and circumstances in which it is found, to a rational manifestation of *natural* feeling. But such a death-bed scene is most *unnatural;* it is insane, it is brutal.

Placing his hand upon the Bible, after being converted from infidelity, Lord Lyttelton said, "A wicked life is the only grand objection to this book." And thus may we account for the infidelity of Paine, Emerson, and many others, whose deaths corresponded with their wicked lives. Alternate praying and cursing, under the pressure of agonizing pain, being the outward display of their inward hopelessness and misery.

The depraved morals of such men as Paine and Voltaire come out in their writings, which are stained with obscenity and pollution. But others there are who are more guarded

in the expression of their sentiments, well knowing that coarseness and pollution upon the printed page are becoming more and more unpopular, and are therefore to be prudentially avoided. Nor are there wanting infidel writers who speak favourably of morality; but it is a morality, let it never be forgotten, that is founded solely on *utility*, and such utility as is confined solely to the purposes, and therefore subject to the ever varying circumstances of the present world, but which takes no cognizance whatever of the inward moral monitor Divinely implanted to regulate the affections of the heart and the conduct of the life; nor of man's being destined to appear before the tribunal of his Creator, to render an account of his conduct, and the use he has made of the talents with which he has been intrusted. Based as it is on the mere expediency of a practical morality, their system has nothing to do with the principles of right and wrong, and we are not, therefore, surprised to find interwoven with it maxims the most revolting and licentious.

The consequence is, that as infidelity spreads, the public morals invariably decline; and this, indeed, must necessarily be, because its principles are so congenial to the depraved nature of man. Sinful self-indulgence in one form or another is a characteristic of human nature, and hence the depraved principles and opinions of the infidel rejectors of our holy religion. A man of this class, in conversation with the writer, a gentleman of independent means, and withal a strong "lover of wine and women," thought it "very wrong, very wrong indeed, to place an embargo on men's appetites and passions." The means of indulgence, and an inclination to sinfully indulge, thus gave colouring to this gentleman's creed, and decided his religious belief. Another apparently confirmed sceptic, in a conversation with the

writer on the subject of *sin* as connected with Divinely forbidden indulgences, said with more honesty than is usually found to characterise such persons, "If sin it be, then, *I do love sin.*" This, in truth, is the real secret of men's scepticism, whether learned or ignorant, poor or rich—they "do love sin."

The morality of the exceptional infidel is certainly not the result of his infidel principles, but may arise from nature, policy, education, or the influence of Christian society on public opinion. In confirmation of this well-known fact, we may appeal to infidels themselves. Have their principles ever really made them better or happier? Have they induced them to reform their conduct? Did ever an infidel cease from lying, drunkenness, or debauchery, and become a good and respectable member of society in consequence of his having read the works of infidel writers, as has been the case with multitudes through the influence of Bible teaching? Infidels know well that they have not—not even in a single instance; but rather that its tendency has been wholly the reverse of this. But what does this say for their creed? Is it not a telling argument against the adoption of such principles by every one who would be accounted a rational being?

Are men universally destined to cast their idols to the winds, and worship the true God; to love virtue, and hate vice; to cultivate the arts of peace, and learn war no more; in short, is our world in a moral aspect, ever again to become "as the Paradise of the Lord?" it is through the benign agency of Christian influence alone that it will be effected. It is not in infidelity to accomplish even one of these results. What have the deistical writers and free-thinkers done for the world? Have they been instrumental

in establishing even a single benevolent enterprise? Have they, as the result of their infidelity, done a single thing calculated to promote and increase the blessings of civilization at home, or to extend them "to regions beyond?" Have they not rather by the inculcation and dissemination of their unhallowed principles, exerted an influence whose legitimate tendency is to stultify every God-like aspiration, to check every benevolent enterprise, to discourage and neutralize generous and heaven-born sympathy, as well as to revolutionize the moral sensibilities and religious sentiments of the people? Is there a single virtue to which their principles are really favourable? Is there a single vice that it is not the legitimate tendency of their principles to foster and promote? Not one. They are no less the enemies to the State than they are to the Church—no less the enemies to virtue, social order, and national peace and prosperity, than they are to Christianity. By the abjuring of all religious restraints arising from a belief in man's moral accountability, and a future state of rewards and punishments, they indirectly foster every species of licentiousness and crime, lead to the heartless, unblushing, and remorseless disruption of every sacred tie, and promote a spirit of restless discontent, social and national disorder, anarchy, and every evil work. Substitute infidel for religious principles, and earth would soon become a hell. Infidelity is even many degrees worse than Paganism; for, inculcating, as it does, a belief in the gods, and a future state of retribution, it does impose a degree of moral restraint upon its votaries. But infidelity, or the system of *free-thinking* (irrational and immoral thinking would be more appropriate) imposes no such restraint. It is a system—system did I say?—a medley of negations and principles, loose, immoral, licentious,

disorganizing, revolutionary, diabolical; having their origin in the father of lies, and their ultimate end in the regions of the damned.

If they cannot, or will not, themselves become Christians, why, in the name of all that is good and great, do they (and M. Renan among the rest) attempt the overthrow of Christianity by zealously propagating their doctrines, and endeavouring to infect the minds of all, both young and old, high and low, with their poisonous principles? Why, since they cannot furnish even the semblance of a rational substitute, do they thus madly attempt the subversion of the Christian system of morals and religion, which every one must see is everywhere doing so much for the amelioration and renovation of mankind? Can there be any other reason assigned for such infatuation than that they have a natural hatred to the light of truth which the Book of God reveals? Is it not because they have really an implacable hatred to the *holiness* of Him who is the Searcher of the hearts and the trier of the reins of the children of men? We may, perhaps, be thought severe in our judgment of these anti-Christian innovators; but it is according to the judgment of God, and is expressed, we trust, in the true spirit of Him who said to the infidels of His own day: "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Fill ye up, then, the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"[1]

Infidelity, under the leadership of its captain, secured a

[1] Matt. xxiii. 13, 27-33.

dominant footing for itself by seizing the reins of power for a few short months in France. But how did it develop itself? Why, by immediately converting its abettors into a horde of ruthless assassins, and the country in which it had obtained a footing into a theatre of blood. No sooner did the infidels get into the possession of power than they at once commenced a series of bloody persecutions, which were as brutal and inhuman as were any of those which had previously proceeded from the anti-Christian spirit of an apostate Church, and against the barbarities of which they had, doubtless, been as loud in their protestations as any of their Protestant neighbours. Coupling, therefore, the grossest inconsistency of conduct—an inherent of degenerate nature—with the blind and unreasoning fanaticism of former Popish persecutors, they demonstrated the truth that depraved human beings, whether found nominally within or without the pale of the Church, are alike capable of the most diabolical acts of cold-blooded cruelty and unchristian oppression. Wherever found, they are but noted representatives of that moral disease which has permeated the entire race of fallen humanity.

It is a notable fact in the history of France, that the infidel writings of Voltaire and his coadjutors were closely followed by the French revolution in 1792; and that the terrible revolutionary collapse following the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 was closely connected, in point of time, with the general circulation and popular reception throughout France of the sceptical writings of M. Renan, which, in connection with other infidel works of a like revolutionary tendency, seem to have revived the old deistic and atheistic spirit of the nation. Nor are there wanting indications, in connection with the latter outbreak, that those writings, poi-

soning the public mind and perverting its judgment, were the direct and principal cause of it. Such indications of a past infidel training were plainly evinced by the mingled atheistical cries, denial of all religious beliefs, and daring impieties of some of the Communist assemblies during the short Communistic reign which followed their disastrous and humiliating defeat by the Prussians.

In reference to the former, the revolution of 1792, which by its infidel instigators was impiously styled "the reign of reason," we would observe it was emphatically a "reign of terror," occasioned by spiritual ignorance and depravity, both in its infidel abettors and in the dominant ecclesiastical authorities. The national church, which had been gradually "waxing worse and worse" for many generations past, had become but a corruption of Christianity, and it was, doubtless, to the cruelty and oppression of this so-called "spiritual power" that the infidel reaction, which resulted ostensibly in a bloody struggle for liberty of conscience, was primarily traceable. But the infidels were joined in the general struggle by French Protestants; and so far as the religious element of the Protestants intermingled with the general outcry for liberty of conscience, it was, doubtless, right. They had been the chief sufferers from the want of it, and their motives were pure and good. But with the infidel element it was very different: their aim, in reality, was not *liberty* of conscience, but rather an *annihilation* of conscience. "Crush the wretch" had been their blasphemous battle-cry—no Christ, no Divine revelation, no worship, except that of the "goddess Reason." The consciences of those who differed from them in religious matters must be set at naught, their religious temples destroyed, and none be permitted to remain but such as

were required for the assembling of those who might be pleased to adopt the soul-damning principles of an infidel in the worship of his chosen goddess—Reason!

The altars of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches were alike, in the adoption of heathen language, styled "the altars of the gods;" and their utter abolishment was earnestly advocated by infidel leaders, conspicuous among whom stand forth the names of Ducos and Dupont. Death was pronounced "an eternal sleep," the Sabbath was abolished, and in the Church of Notre Dame a dissolute woman—fitting emblem of the nation's prostituted virtue—was enthroned as goddess-queen of idolized reason. Eating, drinking, wanton merriment, and dancing in a state of half nudity, constituted the service and worship offered to the woman, who remained aloft seated as "goddess of reason" upon her throne! Royalists were apprehended and sentenced to the guillotine; nuns were whipped and otherwise persecuted; and priests were transported, massacred, hacked to pieces by a forest of sabres and pikes, beheaded, or drowned.

Such were some of the infidel results of the French Revolution at the close of the last century. They would, if they could, banish all true religion from the earth; and while ostensibly ignoring cruelty and oppression, they demonstrated to the world that they were as inhuman and equally oppressive in principle with those whose cruelty and oppressiveness in their apostacy from the true principles of Christianity, had, even to Christian forbearance, become wholly unbearable. No sooner were the principles of Voltaire, D'Alembert, Diderot, Rousseau, and others, fully matured, than "the reign of terror" in France began. Men under the regimè of Deistical and Atheistical philosophy

were converted into fiends thirsting for even their innocent fellow-creatures' blood. Blaspheming the God of heaven, they desecrated His sacred altars, proscribed His worship, shut up His temples, and thirsting for the blood of His worshippers, sacrificed them by thousands to the infidel shrine of their idol goddess, Reason! Indentifying the superstitions, the intolerance, the idolatry, and the absurd legends of the Church of Rome, with Christianity, the French philosophers seeing in it nothing worthy of the Deity, vowed eternal enmity to it, and actively employed every means in their power to effect its extirpation.

It cannot be denied that this reaction against the religious superstition and intolerance which had so long prevailed in connection with the priesthood of the national church, was no more than might have been expected. A keen sense of the grievous wrongs which for centuries they had endured under ecclesiastical cruelty and oppression, very naturally aroused large portions of the nation to the highest pitch of a mingled political and religious disaffection, which eventually culminated in a general arousing of the revolutionary spirit, and a universal clamour for reprisals and revenge. But, not content to exercise the moderation and tolerance, the absence of which in the priesthood had brought the nation to its present state, with the possession of power they, in their turn, manifested the direst spirit of oppression and cruelty; and attempting the entire suppression of what they regarded as the superstition of a fanatical priesthood, they immediately rushed into the extreme of fanaticism themselves, by erecting temples—"synagogues of Satan"—for the superstitious worship of "Nature and Reason," giving enthusiastic expression to the religious sentiment of the nation by a general endorsement of the well-

known sentiment of one of their leading devotees to the new superstition, Jacob Dupont: "Behold our gods! Nature and Reason, these are the gods of man."

True liberty of conscience came not from such men as these and the Encyclopedists; it came not from men of the oppressive and cruel Marat, Danton, and Robespierre type; it came not as a development of the principles of infidelity, although God Who "maketh even the wrath of man to praise Him," employed them as an agency to help the Huguenots and Protestants of France in their efforts to develop the true principles of Christian liberty. True liberty of conscience came as a development of the exalted principles of such men as Vinet, Monod, Guizot, Paul Rabant, and Rabant Saint Etienne—all zealous Protestants, and true men of God. Said the latter: "'Toleration! sufferance! pardon! clemency!' ideas supremely unjust towards the Dissenters, so long as it is true that difference of religion, that difference of opinion is not a crime! Toleration! I demand that toleration should be proscribed in its turn, and it will be—that iniquitous word, that deals with us as citizens worthy of pity, as criminals to whom pardon is granted . . . I demand for all non-Catholics that which you ask for yourselves—equality of rights, liberty; the liberty of their religion, the liberty of their worship, the liberty of celebrating it in buildings consecrated to that object; the same certainty of not being disturbed in their religion as you have in yours; and the perfect assurance of being protected as you, as much as you are, and in the same manner that you are by our common laws. Every religion demands a worship in common, and one set of Christians cannot refuse it to another without contradicting their own maxims."

Infidelity, under the name of *Socialism*, parent of social misery and disorder, led also to the French revolution of 1848, and for which also Romanism is in great measure responsible. The infidels hated all true religion under whatever name professed; the Papacy hated and persecuted the reformers of its corruptions. But the Papacy, we may hope, has now well nigh run its course. Apostate, oppressive Rome, which has led to so much infidelity, crime, and bloodshed, is now rapidly on the decline, and is destined to fall, and as such to rise no more. Ere long, therefore, we may hope that a second Gibbon will be in requisition to write, not the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," but of the "Roman Hierarchy." To those who wish well to the true Church of God, and to mankind generally, it is satisfactory to know that while Roman Catholic nations are being afflicted at the present time with the judgments of God, Protestant nations are getting into the ascendancy, which is doubtless the great means in the hands of God of turning the attention of the more enlightened in the Church of the former towards internal reform. The stand taken by Father Hyacinth and other Catholic priests in reference to the celibacy of the clergy and other important matters, together with the conclusions arrived at, and the practical results likely to proceed from such Conventions as the late Roman Catholic Congress held in Germany, and the Ecumenical Council in New York, lead us to hope that in the providence of God, a brighter day is about to dawn upon that long-benighted branch of the Christian Church. When we read in the public journals of Roman Catholic priests, professors, and bishops, meeting, and some of their number speaking of their having been heretofore "acting a farce," and that they will do so "no longer;" when we read of

them discoursing (as at the Catholic Congress recently held at Cologne, in Germany, at which there were present upwards of four hundred delegates from all parts of the world), on such subjects as, "The Union of Protestant and Catholic Christendom—the excellence of Christian Love—the necessity of great changes on such 'burning questions' as the use of the vernacular tongue in the Church Services; the enforcement of Auricular Confession; the vast system of false legends, stories, medals, pilgrimages, and the like; the whole system of clerical instruction; the needless multiplication of dogmas; and the celibacy of the clergy"—when we read that on these various and all-important points, the "Old Catholics," as distinguished from the Ultramontane, "are now pledged to reform," and that "all the proposals relating to the organisation of the reform movement, and to further agitation for reform, were adopted by the assembly," and subsequently confirmed and practically carried out, as at the Congress of Constance, and the more recent Bonn Conference (1874) which was "summoned with a special view to promote intercommunion among Christian Churches of various lands and creeds," we are led to look hopefully to the time when the Church of Rome shall be thoroughly purged and purified, and made meet to be recognised as a worthy and an influential branch of Christ's universal Church —labouring zealously in unison and in love with the various Protestant Evangelical Churches to usher in the millennial era, when, through the agency of the Divine Spirit accompanying the faithful preaching of the Word, the world shall be regenerated and the worship and dominion of Christ be universal.

We repeat: these movements are certainly auspicious; and while they bespeak for the world the steady and certain as-

cendancy of Protestant doctrine, they may also be regarded as anticipating the time when the Churches shall coalesce and become one, when they shall be amicably united under their Common Head, Jesus, and fervently and unitedly join in believing prayer for the Divine blessing upon the world. That time must come, and will come; if by no other means, then by the sword of judgment. The more readily, therefore, the Roman Catholic Church succumbs to the force of enlightened Christian opinion, as based on New Testament doctrine and truth, and purge herself from those unchristian traditions, and ceremonial and doctrinal abominations, which the more pious and enlightened of her communion have, for generations past, been led to bewail—the less tribulation and suffering will she have to endure at the hands of Him who has foretold the overthrow of every form of religious error, the purification of every branch of the Church universal from its corruptions, and that it shall be succeeded by a period of great religious prosperity—the millennial era.

Those also in the Church of England, who, through the weakness of fallen nature, have recently fallen away by adopting the Romish confessional, and copying the silly trappings and other un-Christian accompaniments of ritualistic ceremony, and who thus form a sort of connecting link or medium of communication between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches, will have occasion to retrace their steps, and return to the simpler, yet purer and more rational form of worship; for the same fate will await them as is, by the decree of heaven, in store for the corrupt Church of Rome, in exact proportion to their divergence from the one common standard of doctrine and discipline for the Christian Church—the New Testament Scriptures.

"Is it not melancholy," says the good Bishop of Cork, "to see messengers of mercy trifling with the truth, while souls are perishing around? Nothing can be a substitute for this truth or do the work for which it was appointed. Nothing else can fill up the soul or satisfy its vast desires. To withhold this from the people, or not give it the chief place in the service, is a dishonour to God and a wrong to man. This system [the Ritualistic] suits the senses, but not the soul. It may soothe sentimentalists, but can never satisfy sensible men. . . . We see," continues the Bishop, "not a few Protestant churches with (as it is said in London) Romish ways. We see and lament their disastrous and baneful results. We see in them puerile pageants and empty parade; we see in them Romanism full blown in almost all but the name. We see error in all but triumph, and the truth in all but tears. We hear in the pulpits spurious sons of the Church, who shame their mother and dishonour their descent. We see costly dresses for priests, and hear worthless addresses to the people. Flowers we have in abundance for the senses, but little food for the souls. Such exhibitions in the churches may be fine play for the performers, but they are cruel sport for the people. . . . To turn the parish churches into public theatres, and the sacred service into show and song, the parishioners into passive spectators and listeners, and the clergy into performers, rivalling Rome in ritual, is a profanation of our holy religion which the laity should never sanction, and a wrong to which, cost what it may, they should never submit."

God has never, even in the darkest times, left Himself without witnesses for the truth, and zealous defenders of the faith and pure worship of the Gospel. Nor will He. Future agitations, convulsions, and changes will be overruled and

made to ultimately culminate in the Church's complete emancipation from every form of religious profanation, unholy ceremony, and unchristian service. It is certainly encouraging to find that a memorial against ritualism was signed by some sixty thousand lay members of the Church, and presented to the Archbishops of York and of Canterbury; and that in reply their Graces expressed their "entire disapproval of any such innovation, and their firm determination to do all in their power to discourage it." It doubtless augurs well also for the future of the Church, that we read in the public journals of "anti-confessional meetings" being held in Exeter Hall under the presidency of the Earl of Shaftesbury, followed by similar meetings in the provinces, and a meeting, at which this truly noble Earl also took a prominent part, to "unite Churchmen and Nonconformists" with a view to "the maintenance of the Reformation in the Church of England," and which resulted in the formation of a Protestant "Vigilance Committee," whose business it will be to adopt such measures as may be judged best calculated to counteract the "Romanizing tendency" of the Church. Also that Dr. Temple of Exeter, the Bishops of London, of Cork, and many other distinguished prelates, unite in entering a solemn protest against the antichristian proceedings of those ritualistic innovators who to the extent that they have thus forsaken and backslidden from the right way, have fallen from grace, and, in the language of the Bishop of London, proved "unfaithful to their office, their vows, and their Master, the Lord Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER XVIII.

MAN'S INHERENT DEPRAVITY, REGENERATION, UNITARIANISM, AND A SUBSTITUTED SACRIFICE.

AS men's views of what is right and wrong widely differ, according to individual disposition and character; so, it is evident, there can be no universally recognised "rule of right" if the Word of God be rejected. And were the universal recognition of such a rule possible, it would still want the sanction and authority of the Supreme Being to make it to be regarded as universally obligatory. The "universal conscience" or "moral sense," of which M. Renan speaks, besides being wholly wanting in the authoritative or binding element, is notoriously anything but uniform, even among civilized nations, in the recognition of the elementary and practical principles of right and wrong. And not only do nations and communities, civilized and uncivilized, vary in their judgment in this respect, but the natural conscience or moral sense of individuals of the same community, and brought up under the same course of training, very frequently widely differ; thus showing, from the want of uniformity in this moral principle inherent in man, that a revolution of his moral being has taken place since its creation; that it does not at present retain the pristine perfection of a natural and universal instinct; that hence arises the necessity for a Divine Revelation, setting forth the eternal principles of

right and wrong, and authoritatively demanding an observance of the laws therein laid down in relation thereto; and that hence also arises the necessity of a regenerating Power out of and above himself to restore the disorganized faculties of his moral constitution to their original state of harmony and just appreciation of what is truly right, virtuous, and good, in the sight of God; and, approving it, to be enabled to practise it, as in Scripture enjoined.

But man's moral elevation, says the free-thinking rationalist, is to be brought about by a process of self-culture as based on the laws of "natural progress." Gradual development, through the operation of nature's laws, is, in his judgment, to rectify all the evils that are in the world. The history of civilization as such, however, in connection with the progress and spread of immorality and vice, public and private, national and individual, coupled also with the testimony of the profoundest of heathen sages who were destitute of a Divine Revelation, is against such a doctrine. Recognising the inherent sinfulness of man's nature and his natural incapability of true moral self-renovation, Plato says, "It is implanted in man to sin—the prime evil is inborn in souls. If in this whole disputation, we have rightly conceived the case, virtue is acquired neither by nature's force, nor by any institutes of discipline or teaching; but it comes to those who have it by a certain Divine inspiration over and above the mind's own force or exertion." Similar testimony, evincing the same justness of conception on this important subject, might be adduced from other heathen writers;[1] thus confirming the fact that the heathen world is not wholly devoid of Divine enlightenment, and forcibly illustrating the passage of Scripture which declares that Christ, through the divinity of His

[1] See the writings of Seneca, Socrates, and Plato.

moral nature, is "that light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world."

"The prime evil" is indeed "inborn in souls." Of this, not only the heathen philosopher, but every man who examines himself even by his own acknowledged rule of duty, must be conscious. The practice of what he himself esteems virtue is often contrary to his natural inclination. The performance of known duty is difficult and irksome, while the neglect of it is easy and pleasant to nature. He finds that when he would do good from a sense of duty, evil is frequently present with him. The plain reason is, as the Scriptures set forth, that man's moral and spiritual nature is wholly disordered: naturally, therefore, he is entirely destitute of the power to will and to do that which is truly right and good as a creature sustaining moral and accountable relations to the Creator, and whose duty it is to love God supremely, and his fellow-man sincerely and ardently as a co-partner with him in the race of life, and a candidate with him, by Divine invitation and call, for the immortal glories of the eternal state. As there is, in its essential purity, an entire absence of this principle of love to God and man in the natural heart, in a Scriptural sense while remaining in a state of nature there is no man truly virtuous—"There is none righteous, no not one." Christ came to seek and to save those who were "lost," those who were *dead* in trespasses and sins;" for, as it is further written, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and, "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin; that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."—Galatians iii. 22.

The tide of evil in man's nature, then, can be reversed, and the original harmony of his being restored, by the power

of God alone. True self-conquest and spiritual liberty can be attained only through the direct supernatural agency of the Spirit of God. Failing to recognise such agency, men's efforts at effecting a moral renovation of their natures will ever prove fruitless and unavailing. Their unruly tendencies and passions, bidding defiance to all such radically defective efforts, will maintain their dominion, and assert their tyranny in a thousand imperious forms.

Of the *virtuous* and their ultimate reward, according to his peculiar idea of such, Renan thus speaks: "It is certain that moral and virtuous humanity will have its reward, that one day the ideas of the poor but honest man will judge the world, and that on that day the ideal figure of Jesus will be the confusion of the frivolous who have not believed in virtue, and of the selfish who have not been able to attain to it."[1] As to the nature of what he styles, "The favourite phrase of Jesus," "the kingdom of God," which embraces every form of virtue, Renan describes it in one place as "the highest form of good,"[2] and in another, as "the moral judgment of the world, delegated to the conscience of the just man, and to the arm of the people. . . . The idea of the 'kingdom of God,' and the Apocalypse which is the complete image of it, are thus in a sense, the highest and most poetic expression of human progress."[3] A definition this of "poetic" *mysticism*, or of anything else, rather than of the "kingdom of God," we should say. But as to the means of attaining it, he says: "Jesus often declares that the kingdom of God has already commenced; that every man bears it within himself; and can, if he be worthy, partake of it; that each one silently creates this kingdom by the true conversion of the heart."[4] Every intelligent reader of the New Testament must be aware that this is a

[1] Page 208. [2] Page 205. [3] Pp. 206, 207. [4] Page 205.

pure fabrication, that Jesus never taught such a doctrine, and that it is wholly unscriptural and false. The very passages to which Renan refers the reader in proof of his position, prove the contrary. In the first (Matt. vi. 10), Jesus directs His disciples to *pray for* this kingdom; and in the second (verse 33), in like manner, that men were to *seek it from God*, and before all other things. Jesus' true teaching on this subject was: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again;" and as to whether the agency employed in effecting this New Birth were human or Divine, whether "each one silently creates" this kingdom of God within him for himself, or has it directly and supernaturally created within him by the Spirit and power of God, Christ says: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."[1] Nothing can possibly be plainer or more directly to the point than this. The "true conversion of the heart," of which M. Renan speaks, Christ here declares to be the work of the Holy Spirit—a work fully understood by Him alone who effects it; but, just as by the wind, which we cannot see, real effects are produced which we can see; so with those who are "born of the Spirit," whose invisible working we cannot see, real effects are produced which we can see. We see them frequently evinced by the sudden and (may we not say?) miraculous change in their characters. "Old things," to which they were habitually and strongly attached, "have passed away, and, behold, all things have become new" to them. What they once loved, they now hate. What they once hated, they now love. Their old sinful habits have suddenly been exchanged for new ones. Instead of being the "servants of sin," seduced and led captive by the

[1] John iii. 8.

Spirit of Darkness, they are now "servants of righteousness," led and guided by the Spirit of God, through whom they have consciously received "the adoption of sons," and a title to an eternal inheritance in Christ. They love God, take pleasure in performing His will, "delight in His law after the inward man," esteem His precepts and promises to be "better than gold, yea, than much fine gold." They labour in humble dependence on the Spirit's aid, to walk as Christ also walked, living, by purpose and steadfast endeavour, in the observance of His statutes and ordinances blameless, esteeming the assembling of themselves together for the purposes of Christian communion and fellowship, a high privilege, as well as a sacred duty, and accounting themselves also, in their humility, after all they have done, or can do, but unworthy and unprofitable servants, needing at all times the perfecting efficacy of the blood and righteousness of Christ to fit them for those realms of blessedness into which nothing that is unholy, nothing that is impure, nothing that worketh abomination or maketh a lie, can be permitted to enter. Now, this may be all a marvel to M. Renan, but, thank God, we have His Word and the testimony of millions of intelligent and credible witnesses to attest it.

"Happy," Renan continues, "Jesus would say, is he who, freed from all illusion, by the uprightness of his will and the poetry of his soul, shall be able to create anew in his heart the true kingdom of God."[1] Did Jesus ever say so? Did He ever teach such a docrine? No. He taught that "the true kingdom of God" is within us, it is true; but within whom? and by whose agency did He assert it to be implanted within? and of what did this kingdom consist? It is clearly not to be found within him who denies the ex-

[1] Page 151.

istence of the Holy Ghost; for the kingdom of God, we are told by the inspired Apostle whom He deputed to preach it in His Name, consisteth of "peace, righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" and it is the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, who, according to the teaching of Jesus, implants it within the heart. His words are: "When He [the Holy Ghost] is come, He will reprove [or convince] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.[1] That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Except a man be born of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.[2] Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth," etc. Into all *truth*: "*Liberty* for the true Christian," says M. Renan, "is *truth*;"[3] but Christ, from whom he borrows the sentiment, delares the Holy Ghost to be our only unerring Guide to the possession of it; and, possessing it, He further says, "the truth shall make you *free*"—free from the deceptive wiles and destructive delusions of the wicked one; free from the carnal reasonings and corrupt wanderings of a deceitful and depraved heart; free from the guilt, the pollution, and the galling yoke of sin and of Satan; free from the threatened wrath of a justly incensed God; and free from the eternal pangs which await in the world of woe the impenitent guilty.

The truth shall make us free indeed; but unless philosopher Renan really has the truth, he has not, of course, the freedom it gives; and having rejected the proffered assistance of the heavenly Guide to it—the *only* Guide to it—he is, of course, justly left to himself; "given over," on the authority of God's Word, "to believe a lie," denying in His essential character "the Lord that bought him," and bringing upon himself "strong delusion" with regard to every-

[1] John xvi. 8. [2] John iii. 5, 6. [3] John xvi. 13.

thing fundamentally essential to salvation. He cannot, therefore, be a true Christian, or disciple of Christ, as he supposes himself to be, but remains still in the bondage referred to by Him whom as a Model Man, a mere Human Exemplar, he professes to so passionately admire. And having rejected the doctrine of man's inherent depravity, moral impotency, and the consequent necessity of the New Birth by the power and Spirit of God, he need not be surprised if when at heaven's gate he knocks, and cries, "Lord, Lord, open unto me, have I not honoured Thee, professed Thee, and in Thy Name written a wonderful work?" the Lord shall answer and say, "Because ye have rejected Me, and the word of My testimony, I also have rejected you. You have still a heart polluted by sin, and a carnal mind which is at enmity against God, or you had not continued to close your eyes against the plain teaching of My Word. Said I not unto thee, Marvel not at this, ye must be born again, that except ye be converted and become as a little child, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven, and that without the merits of My death to procure for you the gift of the Holy Ghost, who should guide you into all truth, you could do nothing—could take not a single step in the true and only way of salvation? But you have rejected My testimony, and would none of My counsel; therefore depart from Me, ye worker of iniquity; as you have sown so also shall you reap; your portion, by wilful and voluntary choice, is with hypocrites and unbelievers, and your just retribution, therefore, is everlasting remorse in the place of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth."

But, says Renan, "Jesus has no more authentic followers than those who seem to deny Him." Deluded man!

But in reference to those who have "attained unto virtue" among them, "Will Jehovah forget them eternally?"[1] Yes, forget them, forget all His Fatherly relations to them, unless they truly and fully attain unto the virtue which is the result of the New Birth, realised through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as having "died for our sins and risen again for our justification." "Christ and Him crucified" is the great doctrine of the New Testament, and Jesus Himself taught it as essential to salvation: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."[2] "This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."[3] "The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."[4] "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."[5] "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."[6] And to the penitent thief who would enter the kingdom of heaven through Him, He said—although at a moment when His enemies were sure that they had triumphed over the now helpless Nazarene in having caused the life-blood to flow from His hands and feet—with all the assurance and calm confidence of associated Deity, and consciousness of His right and power even in such an hour to thus exercise as God the Son the Divine prerogative, He said, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."[7] He was about finishing the work which should purchase for the believing penitent, free admission into the kingdom of heaven, and on this ground and no other, according to the teaching of Jesus, was the promise made. Christ preached Himself as

[1] Page 67. [2] John xiv. 6. [3] Matt. xxvi. 28. [4] John vi. 51. [5] John x. 9. [6] John iii. 14, 15. [7] Luke xxiii. 43.

the sin-atoning sacrifice; and His Apostles thus preached Him. The enlightened portions of the world have believed, and do still believe in such preaching; and God blesses it to the salvation of their souls, filling them with a joy and peace in believing, to which millions have borne testimony as passing human understanding on any other ground than that it is a gracious affection, a Divine principle supernaturally inwrought in the heart by the power and Spirit of God.

"By our absolute sincerity and our disinterested love of the pure idea," says M. Renan, "we have founded—*all we who have devoted our lives to science*—a new ideal of morality."[1] "The oppositions of science falsely so called," the Apostle tells us, are but "vain babblings."[2]—a most expressive term, we would observe, by which to characterize the false applications of science made by a host of modern rationalistic savans. "We who have devoted our lives to science," however, may found what "new ideal of morality" we please, "the foundation of God will nevertheless stand sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His." "To the law and the testimony: if they speak not after this law, it is because there is no light in them." A clean heart and a right spirit—the creation of which within us, allow me to repeat, is the work of the Holy Ghost—are the Scriptural foundation for all truly good works, such as are alone acceptable with the Father; and the procuring cause of this new birth, as we have said, is Christ—the death of Christ; and hence the absolute necessity of faith in Him, which He Himself represents as the great work of works—the primary work, that which must precede every other in order to our justification before God. "This is the work of God," said Jesus, "that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent;" and,

[1] Page 306. [2] 1 Tim. vi. 20.

"He will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on Me." And again: "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." But why so, in the case of the Jews, if they practised the morality of the law and the prophets, the sum of which was the very morality which Christ Himself taught—namely, love to God and our neighbour? Why, obviously, because there was a needs be for an atonement "for the remission of sins which are past," and the perfect righteousness of Him who is "the Lord our righteousness," to answer for the moral pollution and sin which are the inherent of "every man that cometh into the world," and which are invariably more or less developed in the active, voluntary life of every human being. He by whom, as the Apostle says, "we have now received the atonement,"[1] was "delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification;"[2] and therefore it is that God, who was thus "in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," can now "be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," who "by the grace of God tasted death for every man," and "was the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world;" and hence also it is written, that "there is no other name given among men whereby we can be saved, but by the name of Jesus." It is scarcely necessary to observe here, that good works are not hereby rendered unnecessary. They are absolutely indispensable to salvation; but the performance of them in the Christian spirit and from truly Christian motives—gratitude and love to God in Christ, who "was made sin for us, and died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them"—is impossible to the unregenerate—to every one who is not

[1] Rom. v. 11. [2] Rom. iv. 25.

made a new creature in Christ, who is not, by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the expressive language of Scripture, "created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works."

The only sense in which M. Renan regards Christ as our Saviour is that of the Unitarian belief, which is to look upon Him as merely a highly-enlightened, human teacher, effecting men's salvation by inducing them to do the supposed will of God as taught by Himself—a notion, in view of what is written of Him, silly in the extreme. In this sense, all the prophets and all true teachers of religion are saviours, and the apostles and all godly men who have died as martyrs for the truth must be regarded as having borne the world's sins "in their own bodies," "tasted death for every man," and "washed them from their sins in their own blood," and for whom they have thus, in the Unitarian sense, made an atonement. But whilst it is prophetically written that, because none other of sufficient merit could be found, Christ's "own arm brought salvation, that He trod the winepress of God's wrath alone, that He was wounded for our transgressions, and that upon Him were laid the iniquities of us all (including the sacred writers and apostolic martyrs), that with His stripes we might be healed;" and while the apostles declare that "by the righteousness of *One* the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life," that He "by Himself purged our sins,"[1] and that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's *only* begotten Son, "cleanseth us from all sin,"[2] we shall be justified in regarding the Unitarian's saviour as a mere figment of their own mind's creation, made to usurp the place, Divine work, and prerogatives of Him whom alone the Scriptures declare to be "the Saviour of all men."[3] When the Unitarian shall stand Saviourless at the bar of Christ's judgment, he will

[1] Heb. i. 3. [2] 1 John i. 7. [3] 1 Tim. iv. 10.

find to his eternal confusion, as taught by the inspired Word, that God in Christ is jealous of His glory, and that His glory in this respect is not to be shared with another.

There is no *injustice* connected with this substituted sacrifice, as has been affirmed; nor is its consistency with reason so incomprehensible as some men appear to imagine. Because one man's mind cannot grasp or comprehend a subject is no reason why another's should not, and therefore can be no just ground for pronouncing such subject incomprehensible to human reason. But even where it is otherwise, where a matter really involves what to the human mind is a mystery, may we not, we ask, rejoice in it? Are we not at liberty to rejoice in mysteries, or rather, in the results arising from them as existing *facts?* Do we not thus rejoice in them?—in the results arising, for instance, from the mysterious operation of the laws of gravitation, of electricity, of vegetation, of animal and mental life, and of spiritual existence, comprehending the Deity Himself? All these existences and operations are to the human mind mysteries. But although the mysterious operations connected with natural existence are thus beyond the reach of human reason, and must ever remain more or less incomprehensible to finite minds, do we refuse to believe in them? Certainly not. Let us then be consistent, be rational, in our contemplation of the revealed mysteries of holy Scripture, and in view of the glorious results arising therefrom, accord to them a hearty, joyous, and reasonable recognition.

We must carefully avoid setting reason any impossible tasks, but in the matter of a suffering substitute as an atonement for another's transgression, we are very far from being sure that it is not within the domain of human reason.

In opposition to assertions to the contrary, we affirm that the substituted sacrifice for sin as revealed to us in the Scriptures, *is just.* It is so because it was voluntarily made by Him who had a right to make it. It is the voluntary offering of Love, with the nature of which self-sacrifice or voluntary suffering for another is not incompatible. The inherent generous impulses of Love are thus gratified; and since it is against this Love itself that the offence was committed for which it voluntarily suffers, it has a right on the ground of equity to exempt from punishment the offender whom Love first desired to forgive, and then from inherent benignity voluntarily suffered to procure such forgiveness for him.

The guilty offender has thus sinned against infinite Love, and it is in His nature to forgive; but since the offence is a criminal act involving the breaking of law to which a penalty had been justly attached, the majesty and rectitude of the law must be maintained. But the Love that enacted this law for the good of the creature, from the same feeling of benevolence commiserating the state of suffering to which man has brought himself, volunteers to suffer the penalty of the broken law Himself, and thus while He asserts and maintains the righteousness of the law He had enacted, from pure benignity and compassion He places the offender on innocent ground again, and restores him to his origina condition of the most affectionate and loving union with Himself.

There must, of course, be no distinction made here between Christ and God; for as Christ has been proved to be God, and God is *love*, Christ is therefore love. Even His associated human nature may be said to be love, because it was made in the image of God, and was sinless

and perfect. There is therefore no injustice done to the substituted sacrifice even as connected with His humanity, because, in conjunction with Deity, He acted from the *voluntary* promptings of His own inherent goodness. Nor is there *injustice* as it regards the releasement of the transgressor, because the penalty of the law has been paid; and, moreover, through this substituted suffering *love*, purifying and reformatory effects are produced in the heart of the offender, such as neither would nor ever could be effected as the result of his suffering the penalty himself. A criminal discharged from a human tribunal on the ground of an accepted substitute, would have the guilt of his crime still attaching to him, and would, moreover, with such releasement from merited punishment, be granted liberty to go at large with his depraved and criminal nature unchanged, and which might hence lead him to again pursue a similar criminal course. Not so, however, with those whom Divine *justice* liberates. The *guilt* of their past crimes is wholly removed from their consciences, and the pollution is cleansed from their souls. Being "born again," or "renewed in the spirit of their mind" by the power of the Holy Ghost, they have new natures, and carry about with them the impress of the pure moral image of Him who, through the atonement, has graciously freed them from the just penalty of the broken law, and, just as though they had never sinned, brought them into a state of holy and innocent relationship with Himself.

Now we admit that *justice* could not accept of a suffering substitute in the sinner's stead, whom it had doomed to endless confinement in a place of punishment on the ground of his rebellion and consequent moral unfitness to be allowed the freedom of a pure spirit, unless means were devised in

connection with such substituted sacrifice for the perfect renovation of the sinner's moral nature. But through the efficacy of the atonement, and the joint action of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, on the sinner's behalf, provision has been made for this. Hence while a human tribunal might not on the ground of a substitution voluntarily offered, justly acquit a criminal with the guilt of his crime and a vicious, polluted nature still attaching to him,—in the pardon and deliverance procured for the sinner by the sacrificial death of Christ, even infinite justice itself acquiesces; for the righteous principles of law have thereby been honoured, and the claims of justice fully met.

Again: in the providential government of God it is undeniable that from the beginning the innocent have had frequently to suffer in consequence of the sins of others. This is an historical and an existing *fact*, and which may hence be as reasonably urged against the *justice* of God's providential government, as may the alleged *unjust* sufferings of the innocent involved in the atonement. The equity of the Divine procedure is alike involved in both, and can be got rid of only on the assumption that there is no Divine Providence taking cognizance of and directing the events which are transpiring in our world; and this, in view of man's *present condition as disconnected from a future state of rewards and punishments*, necessarily involves a denial of the rectitude of the Divine moral character, and is but one step from pure Atheism, or a denial of the Divine existence.

We may here further remark that as it is not inconsistent with the Divine *justice* to accept of a suffering substitute, so neither is it inconsistent with His *mercy* to allow the impenitent guilty to eternally suffer the penalty of their wicked and wilful rebellion. It should be remembered by those

who seem to delight to dwell on the indiscriminate exercise of the mercy of God, that we are indebted to the same Word which seals the sinner's suffering doom for absolutely all we know of God's *mercy* in its relation to man as connected with futurity. Mercy is a glorious attribute of God, or guilty man had never known forgiveness; but there are no jarring elements in the Deity. God is as righteous as He is compassionate, and just as He is merciful. Between His attributes the most perfect harmony subsists. Mercy and justice in Him embrace each other, and act together with the most perfect consistency and agreement. Infinite wisdom cannot err; and as mercy, with which it is inseparably combined, allows much suffering to exist among men even while living upon the earth as probationers, what amount of suffering, in consistency with infinite mercy, may there not at the demand of justice exist in the world of punishment? The fact is, that both Scripture and reason lead us to the conclusion, that as "it has not entered into the heart of man" to conceive of the glory and happiness which God hath laid up for them that love Him, so on the other hand, it has never entered into the heart of man to conceive the weight of misery and woe that infinite justice has prepared for those who despise and reject the salvation which God at an infinite price has graciously and mercifully provided.

In connection with the ill-desert of sin and the everlasting punishment of the sinner, a consideration also of the *holiness* of Him of Whom it is said, "Holy and reverend is His name," should never be overlooked. God's nature being holy, He cannot in the nature of things look upon unholiness in the creature with complacency, or with any degree of allowance. It is impossible. Even a renewed

man feels at times a hallowed detestation, a holy horror at sin in others when brought within his view; and this invariably in exact proportion to his freedom from it himself, and to the closeness of his union and communion with the holy God. What then must be the abhorrence with which it is regarded by Him Who is *infinite* in the attribute of holiness? Then, again, we must not overlook God's *sovereignty* as Creator and Preserver, in connection with the moral turpitude, guilt, and punishment, of the disobedient and rebelling creature. If it be right for a father to disinherit his disobedient and rebellious child; if it be right for a master to punish his disobedient servant—a teacher, his pupil—a sovereign, his subject—the ruling powers of a country, the criminal law-breakers of that country—if it be right, I say (and no one questions it), for man to thus punish man for disobeying man's command, and breaking man's law, then he who disobeys and receives the punishment, must be guilty. But if the creature is guilty, and, judging from the punishment sometimes inflicted and adjudged righteous, very guilty, for disobeying or breaking the law of his fellow—a creature like himself—what must be his guilt incurred in disobeying and breaking the law of Him in Whom he momentarily lives, and moves, and has his being, and from Whom he derives every blessing he enjoys? In proportion as his obligations to God, considered in his relation as his Maker and Preserver, are beyond his obligations to a mere creature, so is his guilt incurred in disobeying his Creator beyond that incurred in disobeying the creature. And as the difference between his obligations to his Creator and his obligations to a fellow-creature, corresponds with the difference between the Infinite Himself and the finite, so the difference in the guilt incurred must pro-

portionably approximate to the infinite, and the punishment, *to be just* must be in a corresponding degree. Furthermore, as we are assured that the sufferings of the lost will not lead them to cease blaspheming and sinning against God, so *justice* will for ever demand that their punishment be ceaselessly continued. Let us cease then to imagine injustice in the eternal damnation of sinners. The Judge of all the earth cannot but do right. Whatever God does, has done, or will do, must necessarily be wise, and right, and good; whether it relates to the creation, redemption, salvation, or damnation, of moral agents, or to anything else that He has done, or may do, in any part of His illimitable dominions.[1]

[1] See the doctrine of "future punishment" treated at length in a little work by the author, entitled "The Doctrines of an American Destructionist candidly considered and refuted."

CHAPTER XIX.

The Sabbath a Divine Institution, and its Sacred Observance of Perpetual Obligation.

ALTHOUGH the Sabbath was instituted by the Divine Being for the holiest of purposes, and was religiously observed as a sacred day of rest and an unspeakable blessing to mankind, M. Renan represents our Lord as winking at its profanation, and says, "He openly violated it." With such teachers as M. Renan for their guides, is it any wonder that the French have become so notorious for their open desecration of the Sabbath? If they strictly adhered to the violation of it with which Jesus was charged, however—merely satisfying in the most frugal manner the cravings of nature for food, and performing deeds of love and mercy to man—theirs would be an enviable notoriety. The Sabbath was made for man as a day of rest and spiritual improvement—a day in which men were to specially reverence God's sanctuaries, and meet for the observance of public and Divine worship. Does the teaching of M. Renan and his infidel coadjutors lead to such an observance of it? Let the history of revolutions in France, and the demoralizing effects which have continued to flow from them in the open, shameless, and widespread desecration of the Sabbath, answer.

It is much to be lamented, however, that not only in France, and throughout the continent generally, but even

among the English speaking populations, whether at home or in the Colonies, the crime of Sabbath-breaking is deplorably prevalent. Individuals and companies, railway, shipping, and others, with the Governments that control them, are alike guilty of this great sin against the expressed will of the Almighty. With daring impunity God's holy day is still extensively desecrated, and there appears to be little tendency at present towards an abatement of the evil. As prevalent in some professedly Christian countries to-day as it was in ages past, the crime becomes magnified, and the guilt thereof greatly increased. It must, I think, be manifest to every unprejudiced mind, that the guilt incurred by Sabbath-breakers of the present day must be immeasurably greater than that of those who lived in an age of comparative darkness and ignorance. At no period of the world's history was religious light and knowledge so universally diffused as it is at the present; and never was there a time when the minds of men in general were so much enlightened as it respects their duty to God and their fellows. This, as a matter of course, brings with it a vast increase of moral responsibility, and renders our age really a critical one to live in. But how strangely overlooked and disregarded is this great fact, this momentous truth, by the great majority of those who constitute civilized, cultivated, and, in a certain sense, Christianized Society. Although the Bible has been proved, beyond the possibility of refutation, to be Divine, and although through the instrumentality of God-sent messengers, the scenes of Sinai and of Calvary, the glories of heaven and the miseries of hell, have frequently been made to pass before the mind with all the vividness of a panoramic view, and all the forcibleness of conscious reality, yet, so depraved is man, that in number-

less instances it is all of no avail! Disregarding the benignant designs of the Creator and Lawgiver, they continue to despise His sanctuaries, desecrate His holy day, and in the madness of their wicked career defiantly raise their puny arm of rebellion against the revealed will of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

To refer only to the open desecration of the Sabbath by legalized companies as an instance, irrespective of the crime in itself, and their own individual accountability to their Maker for its commission, the infidel example which they set to the country at large is very pernicious in its effects, and reflects very discreditably on the Government that permits it. Is it any wonder, if, on rebuking a rustic for using the spade or the scythe on the Lord's day, we get the reply: "Have I not as good a right to work upon the Sabbath as railway and steamboat companies and their men?" The Government, with the various legal authorities of a country, has its interests professedly at heart. The promotion of the welfare and best interests of the entire community is its legitimate province; and its powers and prerogatives are sufficiently extensive, if properly used, to effect this object. Now the Sabbath, as Jesus tells us, being made *for man*, and not for the Jew merely, from a candid consideration of the following passages of Holy Writ, it must appear quite evident to every intelligent mind that national prosperity in a very great measure depends upon the manner in which the sacred institution of the Sabbath is observed: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speak-

ing thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth."[1] "It shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto Me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein: then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and this city shall remain for ever."[2] Allowing this to be the case, which the history of nations, corrupt and imperfect in obedience as without exception they have been, fully confirms, would it not manifestly be the wisest policy the governing powers of a country could adopt, to enact the most stringent laws relative to the devout observance of this holy institution, and to enjoin and encourage the highest possible degree of vigilance in the enforcement of them? It certainly would.

Permit me to add to the foregoing, in the hope that it may not be altogether unproductive of good effects, the following brief view of the general question of the institution of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath is a Divine institution, the seventh portion of time being hallowed and set apart for holy purposes from the creation of the world. Its nature as a precept may be regarded as twofold, positive and moral; and such is the intimate connection between its proper observance and the moral and religious prosperity of the world that God has been pleased to make it a precept of the Moral Law. It was therefore "made for man," not as he may be a Jew or a Christian, but *as man*, a creature bound to love, worship, and obey his Creator and God. "It is impossible," says

[1] Isa. lviii. 13, 14. [2] Jer. xvii. 24, 25.

Dr. Gardiner Spring, "to account for its collocation in the Decalogue with the highest duties of religion, and the leading rules of personal and social morality, except on the ground that it is intimately, or rather, essentially connected with the sacred principles of homage to God, and mercy to men, involving public, and *undistracted* public religious worship, as a means to an end."

That the law of the ten commandments, and therefore of the Sabbath, is obligatory on Christians, plainly appears from the following passage from the Romans: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." Again he says, "I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." This being a plain reference to the tenth commandment of the Decalogue, as plainly shows that the Decalogue is "the law" of which he speaks, and that it is therefore of perpetual obligation.

A sufficiently explicit enforcement of the moral law, and therefore of the Sabbath, as binding upon Jew and Gentile alike, and extending to the end of time, may be gathered also from the teachings of Christ. First: "I came not," said He, "to destroy the law;" which shows that it was still to remain in full force, and that the Sabbath which, He said, "was made for man"—a general expression embracing the entire race—was to continue to be regarded as an existing institution. Secondly. This view of the case is still further confirmed by His having indirectly commanded its continued observance. In addressing the rich young man of whom we read in the Gospels, after calling his attention to the fact that there is none inherently good but God (whom, judging from Christ's remark to him, he did not take the "good master" to be) Christ said, "If thou

wilt enter into life, *keep the commandments;* and come follow Me." Finally, Christ sums up the whole of the moral law and reduces it to two great commandments, involving the *indestructible* moral principles of love to God and man, and on which, He says, "hang all the rest;" thus reducing the Sabbath to the nature of a moral precept, and which therefore not only necessarily continues to be binding, but, on moral grounds, demands as strict an observance as any other precept of the Decalogue, which never has been, and to the end of time never will be, by Divine authority, repealed.

The objects of the Sabbath also indicate its perpetuity. In Scripture it is frequently styled a "Sabbath of rest," which appears to be not only commemorative of the creation, at the close of which God represents Himself as having "rested from all His works which He had created and made,"[1] but is emblematical also of a prospective eternal rest—"the rest which remaineth for the people of God"—and as no emblem or type can be discontinued till it has been fulfilled by its antitype, so the observance of the Sabbath must be binding upon us till time shall be no more, and the rest which remaineth for the people of God be revealed to the entire assembly of those who have diligently and faithfully observed God's Sabbaths while on earth.

Again: among the benevolent objects had in view by the Almighty in instituting the Sabbath, is rest from toil both for man and beast; and as in the nature of things the necessity for this will continue to the end of time, it is another indubitable indication of its perpetual obligation.

Yet again: the fact of its being designed to perpetuate the knowledge of true religion in the earth is another proof of its perpetuity. "It is a sign between Me and thee for

[1] Gen. ii. 3.

ever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested."[1] "Hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God."[2] The Sabbath recurring every week, thus becomes a "sign" between God and man of singular significance. Its continued observance transmits the events which it commemorates down to the successive generations of men, as matters of incontrovertible reality. As coins, pillars, monuments, and observed holidays have ever been regarded as even more than strong presumptive evidence in proof of the events they were designed to commemorate, so it is with the Sabbath. "It is a public observance of matters of fact, the reality of which could be easily ascertained, which was got up from the period in which the facts themselves took place, and as such, has come down through successive centuries to the present hour. When we speak of the Sabbath, we at once recur to the reasons of its institution. We should have known nothing of the Sabbath but for the events themselves which this day commemorates; and in the events hereby established—the creation, and the resurrection of our Lord from the dead—we have an epitome of the evidences in favour of the true religion.

"Traces of the original appointment of the Sabbath, and of its observance prior to the giving forth of the law of Moses, have been found by the learned in the tradition which universally prevailed of the sacredness of the number seven, and the fixing of the first period of time to the revolution of seven days. The measuring of time by a day and night is pointed out to the common sense of mankind by the diurnal course of the sun. Lunar months and solar years are equally obvious to all. So that the reason why

[1] Exod xxxi. 13, 17. [2] Ezek. xx. 20.

time has been computed by days, months, and years is readily given. But how the division of time into weeks of seven days, and this from the beginning, came to obtain universally among mankind, no man can account for without having respect to the tradition of a Sabbatical rest from the foundation of the world. Yet plain intimations of this weekly revolution of time are to be found in the earliest Greek poets, Hesiod, Homer, Linius, as well as among the nations of the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. It deserves consideration, too, on this subject, that Noah, in sending forth the dove out of the ark, observed the septenary revolution of days;[1] and at a subsequent period, in the days of the patriarch Jacob, a week is spoken of as a well-known period of time.[2] These considerations are surely sufficient to evince the futility of the arguments which are sometimes urged for the first institution of the Sabbath under the Law. The truth is, that the seventh day was set apart from the beginning as a day of rest; and it was also strictly enjoined upon the Israelites in their law, both on the ground of its original institution,[3] and also to commemorate their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt.[4]

"As the command relative to the observance of the Sabbath is partly positive and partly moral, it may have circumstances which are capable of being altered in perfect accordance with the moral principles on which it rests and the moral ends which it proposes. Accordingly we find that in the original institution it is stated in general terms that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day, which must undoubtedly imply the sanctity of every seventh day; but not that it is to be subsequently reckoned from the first demiurgic day. As the law was to be universally binding, and as from the difference in longitude the same portion of

[1] Gen. viii. 10, 12. [2] Gen. xxix. 27. [3] Exod. xx. 8-11. [4] Deut. v. 15.

time which constituted the seventh day from the creation could not be observed in all parts of the earth, the decalogue leaves the computation of the weekly cycle undetermined, and, after six days of labour, enjoins the seventh as the Sabbath, to which the Christian practice as exactly conforms as the Jewish. It is not, however, left to every individual to determine which day should be his Sabbath, though he should fulfil the law so far as to abstract the seventh part of his time from labour. It was ordained for worship—for *public* worship; and it is therefore necessary that the Sabbath should be uniformly observed by a whole community at the same time."[1]

Now, although there is not on record any Divine command issued to the apostles to change the Sabbath from the day on which it was held by the Jews, to the first day of the week, yet, when we see that this was done in the apostolic age, and that the change was made under the sanction of inspired men, and those men the appointed rulers in the Church of Christ, whose business it was to "set all things in order" which pertained to its worship and moral government, we may rest well satisfied with this, that as a Sabbath is obligatory upon us, we act under apostolic authority for observing it on the first day of the week, and thus commemorate at once the creation and the redemption of the world.

Immediately after the resurrection of Christ from the dead, the disciples began to assemble for holy convocation on the first day of the week, and on two occasions, at least, before our Lord's ascension, their meeting was hallowed by His visible presence.[2] St. John also emphatically calls the first day of the week, "the Lord's Day." But the argument in favour of apostolic authority for the observance of the

[1] See Article "Sabbath," A. R. Encyclopædia. [2] John xx. 19–26.

first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath, is mainly deduced from Acts xx. 7, and 1 Corinthians xvi. 2, which show conclusively that it was customary for them to meet for religious worship on that day; and the more so, as there is not a single instance on record of their having met as a Christian assembly for "breaking of bread," etc., on the seventh day. From such testimony as this in favour of an observance of the Sabbath, and of its change from the seventh to the first day of the week, there can be no appeal; and accordingly it does not appear from history that any of the early Christians (either real or nominal) ever called it into question.

The example of the primitive Christians is also to be regarded as a strong argument in favour of the change. Justyn Martyr, one of the Fathers of the Church who figured in the early part of the second century, informs us, that "on the Lord's Day all Christians in the city or country meet together because that is the day of our Lord's resurrection, and then we read the writings of the apostles and prophets; this being done, the president makes an oration to the assembly, to exhort them to imitate and to practise the things they have heard; then we all join in prayer, and after that we celebrate the Sacrament."

Eusebius, the father of ecclesiastical history, and the most learned man of his time, who was born in Palestine about the year 250, and whose ecclesiastical history extends from the birth of Christ to the year 324, observes, that "from the beginning the Christians assembled on the first day of the week, called by them the 'Lord's Day,' for the purposes of religious worship, to read the Scriptures, to preach, and to celebrate the Lord's Supper."

With regard to the sacredness of this holy day, and the

manner in which it should be spent, as distinguished from ordinary or common days, as might be supposed on a subject fraught with so much importance to the interests of humanity and religion, we are not left to mere conjecture, nor simply to implication from the manner of its observance by the Jews and early Christians. The Divine Word is sufficiently explicit upon it. It is, first, to be a day of sacred rest from the toils of ordinary labour, and to be kept holy unto the Lord: "Six days may work be done, but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord."[1] "That thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thine handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed;"[2] and "that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou."[3]

To be a day of holy convocation: "Ye shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuaries: I am the Lord."[4] "The seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation, ye shall do no work therein."[5] "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is."[6]

A day for public preaching and worship: "The people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the Lord in the Sabbaths."[7] "And upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them."[8]

A day for works of mercy, and making provision for the poor: "How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days."[9] "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

[1] Ex. xxxi. 15. [2] Ex. xxiii. 12. [3] Deut. v. 14. [4] Lev. xxvi. 2.
[5] Lev. xxiii. 3. [6] Heb. x. 25. [7] Ez. xlvi. 3. [8] Acts xx. 7.
[9] Matt. xii. 12.

Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."[1]

A day of religious rejoicing, but of abstinence from worldly pleasures and conversation: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, etc., for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."[2]

Is the Jew to be a holier man in the observance of this precept of the Decalogue, this institution of the moral law, than the Christian? Verily not. "Them that honour Me," saith God, "I will honour." That the richest of heaven's blessings, both for time and eternity, would invariably and ceaselessly rest upon a people were they to live in the general and proper observance of the Sabbath, there can be no reason to doubt; while its general neglect would most assuredly strike a death-blow to the interests of true religion in any community; and if continued and extended, it would have the effect of flooding the country with every description of immorality and vice, and would soon sap the foundation of every form of national prosperity. Such is the order and purpose of God, as exemplified in His dealings with the Jewish nation.[3] The recent signal punishments of Sabbath-desecrating France may also be taken as an illustration, and as a warning to England and her Colonies.

To the foregoing, allow me to subjoin an article that I wrote on the subject at a time when the question was being publicly agitated in the City of Auckland:

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. [2] Isaiah lviii. 13, 14. [3] Jeremiah xvii. 27.

"The law of the Sabbath," said Archdeacon M., "is binding on all men in all times," and for this saying he has been charged with *arbitrariness;* but his view of the "Sabbath question" as thus set forth, allow me to say, is not a whit more "arbitrary," if such it is to be termed, than it ought to be, seeing that, as a necessary means to a necessary end, it is found by Divine appointment, not among the abolished ceremonials of the Mosaic law, but in the moral code of the Ten Commandments, the whole of which Christ epitomises into love to God and love to man, and which law therefore He did not "destroy" or abolish, but hereby plainly shows it to be of perpetual obligation as a Divine institution, adapted to subserve the spiritual wants of man in his present state. Instrumentally it should be regarded as the grand sustaining pillar of the entire system of the Christian religion. Abrogate the former, and it would immediately be followed by a practical abrogation of the latter with all its direful consequences to our race. This did not Christ. The Sabbath, or the consecration of a seventh portion of time to the special religious worship and service of God as a Divine institution, therefore, cannot be too strenuously maintained. The Christian world should be as jealous of God's holy day as of His holy name, seeing that we have the same authority for reverencing the one that we have for the other. The same Law that says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," says also, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," neither of which commands have been as yet revoked, nor will they to the end of time.

Another of the "many [Reverend!] adversaries" to apostolic teaching, expressed, at the same time, the character of his Sabbatarian views by proposing the following

discriminating queries:—1. "Seeing that the Jewish Sabbath is abandoned, by what authority can the Jewish command respecting the seventh day be applied to a quite different day? 2. Is the desecration of the Sabbath, as it is called, named among the sins rebuked by Christ and His apostles?" In reference to the latter of these queries, we might say, as well ask whether the neglect of the observance of the Eucharist was named among the sins rebuked by the apostles. Its omission in the former case is no more an evidence that a Sabbath observance has ceased to be binding, than is its omission in the latter an evidence that the observance of our Lord's Supper has ceased to be binding.

For the Christian observance of the Sabbath we have the authority of both Christ and His Apostles, inasmuch as throughout the whole of Christ's public life He regularly entered the synagogues on the Sabbath days, and preached, not "Judaism," but the Gospel. And the apostles observed it in the same manner. The only violation of the sacred day of the Sabbath with which our Lord was charged by even His most bitter enemies, was that of plucking ears of corn to supply in this most abstemious manner the craving of nature for food, and also the performance of works of love and mercy, giving as His reason, "It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath day." And as He is the Christian's Exemplar in this as in other things, it is hence lawful and necessary for us to imitate Him in His observance of the Sabbath. Christ and His Apostles through the whole course of their public career observed it as a day for public religious teaching and worship;[1] and it is therefore the duty of all ministers of Christ, and of all who claim to be His followers, to copy Him and the Apostles in the hallowed and purely religious observance of the Sabbath day

[1] Luke iv. 16, and the Acts.

which they have thus indelibly and irrevocably stamped as a Divine institution under the Christian no less than under the Jewish dispensation.

Among the Jews, as we have seen, it was observed as a day of "holy Convocation;" and in like manner among Christians it was a day in which, having the example of the Apostles before them, they could not lawfully "neglect the assembling of themselves together (for public worship, breaking of bread, &c.) as the manner of some is." Another idea, to which we have also referred, which goes to show that the Sabbath was not designed to be merely a Jewish institution, is the fact that it was to be a day of rest, of necessary rest, from labour, and hence extends, by virtue of this necessity of nature, to the entire family of man, and even to the domesticated, working orders of the inferior animal creation. The necessity for this Sabbath of rest can never cease while the world stands; and hence the wisdom of God in making it of universal and perpetual obligation from the beginning of the world to the end of time; and hence also, to deny such a comprehensiveness to the institution is an impious reflection upon the wisdom of the Most High.

Christ, "the Lord of the Sabbath," and Who must hence have been its Institutor, says, it "was made for man." For *man*, not for a favoured few merely, but for men universally who need a day of rest from worldly toil and care, and for the public observance of the ordinances of God's sanctuaries as a Divinely appointed means to a holy end—the spiritual and eternal welfare of the world. Christ, it should be noted, calls Himself "Lord of the Sabbath," not as an abrogated, but as an existing institution; and the Apostle John, accordingly, calls it emphatically "the Lord's Day,"

which is doubtless expressive of its change from the seventh to the first day of the week, thus, simply through this change in the consecration of a seventh portion of time, commemorating at once the creation of the world and the resurrection of our Lord from the dead.

The testimony of the primitive Fathers, as we have seen, corroborates this view; but, irrespective of such testimony, we have unquestionable and inspired authority for the change in that the apostles on the first day of the week regularly met for preaching and the celebration of the holy sacrament, in commemoration of the sacrificial death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour. Copying Christ Himself in the holy observance of a seventh portion of time, and His inspired apostles in their change of the day to the first day of the week, which was sanctioned and their meeting on this day honoured on at least two occasions by the presence of Christ after His resurrection—copying these, I say, who are our only lawful patterns in such things, we cannot go astray; but failing to imitate them in this, we are adrift at once and sailing rudderless upon the trackless sea of vain and fanciful speculation.

CHAPTER XX.

THE PERSONALITY OF SATAN.

THE author's sole object being the advancement of the cause of truth, he need here offer no apology for entering upon the discussion of a subject which, however repugnant to the refined tastes of a certain class of unbelievers, is, nevertheless, regarded as a matter of no little importance by others. If we have a spiritual adversary in the form of a malignant spiritual being who has access to the human mind, and is ever striving to exert a baneful influence upon it, it is manifestly of the utmost importance that we should be apprised of it. An invisible, unknown, and unsuspected foe, must have great advantage in his secret wiles and malignant influence.

The Bible having, in the preceding pages, been demonstrated to be the Divine Word, we shall, of course, quote from it, as from the mouth of God, such passages as may serve to substantiate our position, which is, that the Satan of Scripture is a personal, living intelligence, and not a mere abstract, lifeless "personification of the principle of evil"—a principle, by the way, the origin and existence of which in connection with our world are no less difficult to account for, than are the existence and doings of Satan himself in the same connection. First, then, allow me to premise a few general remarks in reference to the origin of evil, and

its introduction into our world through the fall of our first parents.

God is holy.[1] He is "righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works,"[2] and therefore He is not the Author of sin. God "loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity,"[3] and tempts no man "to evil,"[4] and therefore has never decreed that he shall be necessarily guilty of it. In man's original state, therefore, it must have been wholly a contingent on the voluntary exercise of his free will. It was foreseen by the Creator, however, and therefore, in one sense, comprehended in His creative plan, which appears to have been to create a world of *voluntary* intelligences as being the wisest and best creation of intelligent creature existence that could be made, and from which creation therefore the greatest possible good could be educed; but the evil, although foreseen, is merely incidental, arising from the free agency of this voluntary intelligence, and not a necessity. Were it an absolute necessity arising from the original mechanism of the creature, God would have been the Author of man's sin (if sin the violation of a given law could then be called), and of all the evil which has arisen from it; and man would not in that case have been created a free and voluntary agent. But such an agent he is in Scripture represented to be, and hence his moral accountability, and God's freedom from the charge of being the Author of sin and of the misery which when once committed necessarily arises from it.

A created free agent then was the author of sin so far as its connection with our race is concerned; and this under the instigation of another free agent who had previously been its author in the world in which it appears he had himself been a probationer, and who now from an inhe-

[1] Lev. xi. 14. [2] Psalm cxlv. 17. [3] Psalm xlv. 7. [4] James i. 13.

rently malicious nature sought to introduce it into our world; and was suffered to do so by man's almighty Creator because He had created him with a perfect freedom of choice, and with natural inherent powers which were capable of resisting and of acting contrary to the persuasions of the adversary. It was the righteous and necessary test to which as a constituted free moral agent he must be submitted, or it would not have been permitted. But righteous as was the test, and simple the prohibition, it required an absolute surrender of the will on the part of our first parents to the will of their Maker. They must render implicit obedience to the command whether they could see a reason for the command or not. And here is where they seemed to fail. The prohibition excited their curiosity. The tree was good both for food and to make them yet wiser than they were. Some mysterious key to knowledge must be concealed within the fruit; for had not God Himself named it "the tree of knowledge of good and evil"? The artful reasoning of "the father of lies" here came to their aid, and acting upon this attribute of their nature, in itself holy and good, they were led to harbour the wicked thought that the tempter had put into their minds, instead of instantly repelling it, as Christ did, and the temptation overcame them. Having abundance, they then desired more. Being man, and knowing only good, they would be as God by an extension of their knowledge to the comprehension of evil. Curious to know with certainty to themselves what effects would follow the eating of the forbidden fruit, they listened to the voice of the tempter, entertained his persuasions, and fell.

But, mysterious as it may seem, our first parents might have stood or they had not been free and accountable

beings. Being placed under law, they were made capable of observing that law, and of preserving their primeval innocence and integrity. God's command and Satan's persuasion in reference to them, so far as any constraining power is concerned, were on an exact equality. They were free to resist God's expressed will, and they were free to resist the devil's; and as they did resist the Almighty's, so they might have resisted Satan's. And having power to listen to and obey God, which they did for a time, so they had power to listen to and obey His adversary, which they also afterwards did. So long as they obeyed God, they reaped the reward of obedience; but as soon as they yielded to the suggestions of the wicked one, they merited the punishment consequent on a want of allegiance to their Creator. The punishment threatened was in exact proportion to their guilt and demerit, the enormity of which infinite Holiness and Wisdom alone could fully comprehend.

Let us now consider more particularly the question of Satan's personality, or spiritual and intelligent existence. Speculations, beyond what is revealed, as to the occasion of his fall, with his angels, are vain. The bare fact that, as in the case of man, it was connected with a desire to overstep the prescribed limits which were set to his knowledge and power, is all that we can certainly know about it. But as to his being a "fictitious personage," "an evil disposition," or "the principle of evil personified," as has been maintained by Socinians and Rationalists, the position, as based on what is revealed of him in the Scriptures, is most absurd.

Now it must be evident to every reflecting mind that sin or evil could not have originated itself; and further, that

such a thing as sin or moral evil *in the abstract* is clearly impossible. It must necessarily be associated with intelligence. Moral evil, therefore, having originated with intelligence, the intelligent being who is its author and the evil itself cannot be one and the same. Now, Satan is everywhere represented in Scripture as being the father, the author, the prime originator of sin, and instrumentally of the moral and physical evils which afflict our world; and the necessary consequence is, that Satan is a living, active intelligence, as much so as is any human being who has been brought under the influence and made to feel the effects of the moral evil which has been thus introduced. Scripturally, Satan bears the same relation to sin and evil that any originator does to the thing he originates. To confound the name "Satan," or "devil," therefore, with the evil he has originated, with a view to getting rid of the unwelcome originator, would be just as rational as to attempt to confound the name of any mechanical inventor with the name of the thing he invents, and endeavour to prove that nothing but the thing invented exists, and that the inventor of it never had an existence, except as a fictitious personification of his invention.

The only intimation we have in Scripture of the existence of moral evil, prior to the fall of man, is in connection with the disobedience and rebellion of Satan and the fallen angels, who were therefore, so far as it is revealed to us, the probationary intelligences with whom it first originated. We judge them to have been on probation in the region assigned them called heaven, because of their fall, and because those who did not fall are called "the *elect* angels."[1] That the infinitely righteous and holy God is not its author is certain. He Himself disclaims it, and has

[1] 1 Tim. v. 21.

charged Satan with it. God distinctly names both the originator and the thing originated; and for men to attempt to discard such distinction is simply to exhibit the height of folly. The devil is spoken of, not as evil itself, but as "the *evil one*"—not as sin itself, but as Satan, who "sinneth from the beginning."[1] When the inspired Apostles had occasion to speak of the *devil*, of the devil they spoke, and always as a living, personal, spiritual being; and when they wished to speak of the principle of evil as such, or of sin in any of its forms, of sin and evil they freely spoke, and invariably in the use of significant and appropriate terms—as, for example, Paul: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."[2] No disposition is here manifested to employ fictitious terms to tone down the harshness of sin's appropriate names; nor had the sacred writers any occasion to employ either of the appellations of Satan as a common name to express the woes or wickedness of men in the aggregate, because the words *sin* and *evil* are generic terms, expressive of all degrees and kinds of guilt and misery, and were always freely so used. And where they refer to an individual characteristic of a fallen intelligence, it is invariably in the use of such terms as unmistakably

[1] 1 John iii. 8. [2] Rom. i. 28–32.

point out to what order of beings they refer, whether human or satanic.

In general terms, the Scriptures represent our spiritual enemies to be three in number—"the world, the flesh, and the devil"—and the devil, mark; so that the devil must clearly be a something distinct from the evils which are included under the terms, "the world" and "the flesh," and therefore the devil cannot be a personification of them. Again: we read of "hell" as being a place originally "prepared for the devil and his angels." Can this language be rationally applied to personified evil—evil disconnected with intelligent existence? Could evil in the abstract be cast into hell? To be cast therein, must it not necessarily be in the persons of the living beings with whom it has been associated? This is undeniable. The devil and his angels, then, for whom it was primarily prepared, must have been living; spiritual beings. And hence, also, they are represented as being the tormentors of "the wicked and all the nations that forget God," who are to be cast into hell in company with themselves.

To apply the expression, "devil and his angels," to abstract principles puts the Rationalist in a position so obviously absurd, that the wonder is that anyone could be found to entertain it for a moment. Satan is the Scriptural head or chief of those "angels." How absurd, then, the idea of an evil principle possessing, ruling over, and acting as leader to a number of subordinate evil principles. If the opposers of Satan's personality can see nothing absurd in this, it will remain with them to determine and declare to the world which evil they regard as the Prince of evils, and demonstrate in what manner he may be said to possess and govern all his subordinates. Also, whence they originated;

and in what manner, when in council together, they manage to deliberate on questions that come up before them for consideration.

Men tempt men to sin, and frequently take a depraved pleasure in it, as the Apostle Paul sets forth in the passage above quoted, and they are suffered to do so; then why not an evil spirit be suffered to do the same? The one is no more inconsistent with the revealed character of God than the other. The language the apostles employ, and the incidents they relate in connection with the existence and works of Satan, are such, moreover, as to put the question wholly beyond rational dispute. A figurative interpretation is obviously altogether inadmissible. Their language is unmetaphorical in every such allusion.

Our Lord in casting out devils from persons possessed, always appealed to them as to living, intelligent *spirits;* and these spirits knew Him, and *invariably* spoke to Him rationally and to the point, which mere madmen could not have done. Take, for example, the passage in Luke 4, beginning with verse 33: "In the synagogue there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? I know Thee who Thou art: the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not." And that these devils cannot be mere personifications of disease and other evils, is further evident from the fact, that besides the enumeration of moral evils which, as before remarked, are all designated by their appropriate names, as murder, theft, malice, envy, revenge, &c., the enumeration of the various bodily diseases with

which men were afflicted, and the cure of which was effected by Christ, is given as entirely distinct from spirit possession. In illustration, take Matthew iv. 24—"And they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and He healed them." Also Luke iv. 40, 41—"Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And He rebuking them suffered them not to speak; for they knew that He was Christ." In Luke x. 20, Jesus expressly calls them *spirits;* and in Matt. x. 1, it is written, that "when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean *spirits*, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." It thus appears evident, that the devil and evil angels of Scripture cannot be rationally taken to merely represent or personify moral and physical evil. The possession of devils is clearly one evil as distinct from all others, and those devils are expressly declared to be spirits.

The devil is also set in opposition to God in the possession of a portion of the human family as children: "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil."[1] If, then, God is a personal Being, so therefore must Satan be. The comparison is not made between the abstract qualities of good and evil, but between God and the devil. God is a person, that is, has personal existence as a living, spiritual Being,—and not a mere personification of goodness; and so, reasoning from analogy,

[1] 1 John iii. 10.

testimony, we shall then have to pursue another line of argument. In the meantime, however, he must be content with this. No personal devil or evil spirit, eh? What then was it that told Christ that the name of the company of them to which he belonged was "Legion?" Or what was it which at His command came out of the possessed man, and by His permission entered the swine, causing them to "run violently down a steep place into the sea?" Christ says they were unclean or evil spirits, and the circumstance of their having spoken to Christ through the possessed man's organs of speech, and afterwards entered the swine, producing such a consternation among them as to cause them to run into the sea and drown themselves, confirms the declaration, and proves to a demonstration that they were actually personal devils, and that neither Christ nor His apostles when speaking of unclean spirits or devils were merely personifying the principle of evil, as some most absurdly suppose. Again, except on the admission of their personality, what can be made of the answer said to have been given by the "evil spirit" to "certain vagabond Jews, exorcists, who took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus—Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" And what of the supernatural power exercised?—"And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled from out of that house naked and wounded." And then as to the personality of a leader-in-chief among them, is he not styled the "prince of darkness, the prince of the devils, the prince of the power of the air," &c.? Now a prince of devils and invisible powers must necessarily be a personal being. And must it not necessarily be in his personal

character that he is said to be a liar, and the father of lies, in that he commenced it in the world by lying to our first parents? Again: is there no personality about the being who, by permission, had the control of the elements when the patience of Job was to be exhibited to the world? And is there no personality about the lying spirits who are yet, according to St. John, to be empowered to go through the earth working miracles?—ordered, of course, for the accomplishment of some wise purpose and righteous end, although not so designed by them.

The account given of their origin and destiny as evil spirits also incontrovertibly proves them to be personal beings. The devil and his angels, having sinned were cast out of heaven. Now it is, of course, impossible for a mere principle of evil to have sinned. Indeed, it is self-evident that there can be no such thing as a principle of moral evil, except as associated with personal intelligences. It is also said, that there was a place specially prepared for the devil and his angels after their fall from their original purity, and that they are "reserved in chains"—that is, limited in their infernal powers and exhibitions of malice—"unto the judgment of the great day," after which they are to be shut up in the place called hell, where they are to have unlimited power to torment the voluntary dupes of their subtlety and malice for ever. Now, of course, moral evil was not to be found in heaven, until the rebellion of the fallen angels; and to speak of casting them out of heaven, consigning them to a place specially prepared for their reception (although with liberty to visit our earth and tempt the human family, they being free moral agents), afterwards bringing them to judgment with the nations of the earth, and then sending them back to the same place of torment,

and dooming them to an everlasting existence in it—every one must see would be monstrously absurd on any other assumption than that they were rational, although fallen, and therefore personal intelligences. And then the manner in which the various powers and faculties of Satan are spoken of, is another proof of his personality. He is said to have powers of locomotion—"The devil as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Is said to be a murderer—"He was a murderer from the beginning." The author of lying—"For he is a liar, and the father of it." Has desires—"Satan hath desired to have you." Has devices—"We are not ignorant of his devices." Has a will—"Who are led captive by the Devil at his will." Has obstructing power, and is permitted, though under inexorable limits, to exercise it—"Disputed about the body of Moses. Satan hindered us." Is an accuser—"The accuser of our brethren is cast down." Has powers of seduction—"In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, deceiving and being deceived." Knows that his days upon the earth are numbered—"Having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." That the Jews believed in the personality of the evil spirits spoken of in Scripture, is evident from the following: Said the enemies of our Lord, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." Said His disciples, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through Thy Name." And Christ confirmed them in the belief of their personality, and thereby for ever settled the point under consideration by saying, "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

The process of reasoning by which Mr. Y. builds up his theory of the necessary consequence of the Divine *omnipresence*, leads to the very sensible conclusion that there is *moral good* in everything, and that therefore there can be no devil; or at least no such devil as the Scriptures speak of. God is everywhere present, he says, and therefore in the devil (if there is such a being), and hence there must be some good even in him. We are, of course, to understand him to mean some degree of inherent moral good, more or less active, otherwise the argument would be meaningless, so far as the object he has in view is concerned, which, as we understand it, is the universal diffusion of inherent goodness, extending, as he says, even to "the very worst and most lost and depraved creature" that exists. But whether the gentleman perceives it or not, reasoning from the premises assumed, he is certainly indebted to sophistry and false reasoning alone for the conclusion at which he has arrived. By a parity of reasoning, by virtue of God's presence pervading all nature—animate and inanimate—He is in the flying fowl, the creeping insect, the growing tree, the soil from which it grows, etc.; and hence, according to spiritualistic logic, moral goodness, which can only be the result of intelligent moral action, is to be found in the insect, the tree, the soil, etc. But we would modestly venture to affirm that the spiritual presence of the Deity does not necessitate His producing in the creature the impress of His Divine moral nature; for this would be manifestly absurd. But, however absurd, Mr. Y. avers that His presence alone must effect this; so that, we repeat, as His presence "is everywhere and in everything," according to Mr. Y.'s logic, beasts and birds, trees and stones, are morally good. The fallacy of the argument will, of course, be readily perceived

by the intelligent reader. It is true that, by virtue of God's omnipresence, He pervades universal nature; and by His thus filling "heaven and earth,"[1] and "all in all,"[2] as the Scriptures put it, He may, perhaps, be said to exist in and through the entire irrational animal and vegetable creation. But, if so, it is manifest that His presence serves no other purpose than that of continuing them in existence while performing their respective functions in accordance with the established laws of their being. And in the same sense, we admit, God may be said to be "in the devil," sustaining him in existence, and thus enabling him, as a rational intelligence, to carry out the functions of his being according to the laws which pertain to a fallen spiritual intelligence; but, as in the other case, not to produce in him the impress of the Divine moral image. While, then, God may be truly said to be "in all and through all,"[3] He is thus perfectly distinct from all. It is evident, therefore, that for a person to sophisticate himself into the belief that there must necessarily be inherent moral good even in the devil himself, because the Divine Being is everywhere present, is absurd. This doctrine of spiritualists is akin to the monstrously absurd doctrine of ancient and modern Pantheism, which considers the universe as an immense animal, "Whose body nature is, and God the soul;" as though—to say nothing more of the nonsense and absurdities to which the doctrine necessarily leads—it were possible for the same Being to possess and act out a two-fold nature—the diabolical and the holy, the malignant and the benign, and each in an infinite degree. Such a contrariety of nature in the same Being is impossible.

Mr. Y. puts the question, "Which is supreme—good or evil, God or the devil?" To which we unhesitatingly reply,

[1] Jer. xxiii. 24. [2] Eph. i. 23; iv. 10. [3] Eph. iv. 6.

Good and God; for had it been otherwise, so far as our world is concerned since the fall of Adam, evil has been so much in the ascendancy that it would long since have swallowed up all the good that is in it. And had Satan been supreme, such is his nature, that long ere this he would have dethroned and annihilated the God of goodness and every good and Godlike principle in the universe. A "dreadful deity," indeed, this would be, and a condition of things not easily conceived, much less described. But in one part of creation such a "reign of horror" is actually exemplified. Satan, by permission, has achieved a victory, not over God, but over his willing captive, man. In hell the power of evil is not only in the ascendancy, but reigns supreme, without a single redeeming spark of Divine love or principle of moral good. But in another place—heaven—the reverse of this is exemplified. The entire absence of all moral and physical evil, and the presence of everything that is good, grand, and sublime, will make it a paradise resplendent with beauty and blessedness. And from the mouth of God we have it, that the two places and states will stand forth as a living contrast of the condition of things produced by the opposite principles of love and hate, good and evil, so long as the interminable ages of a coming eternity shall continue to roll on. That the one no less than the other is to be eternal in duration must, I think, be obvious to every reasonable person, from the consideration that the Scripture terms employed to express the duration of the two states of reward and punishment are one and the same. In the use of *the only terms found in the Bible expressive of endless duration*, the two states are invariably made to run parallel. If, therefore, heaven is to continue for ever, so also is hell; and as the latter is invariably described as a place of

punishment,[1] so it is made to consist in ceaseless torment, giving rise to a state of feeling expressed by the passage, "weeping and wailing, day and night, for ever and ever"—in other words, deathless misery, in the place "where their worm *dieth not*, and their fire is not quenched."

In taking leave of this Spiritualist, permit me to say that his creed, like the character of its author, is a bad one. Were anything more required to convince sensible people of the satanic origin of modern "Spiritism," other than the senseless twaddle that is from time to time enunciated by its media, and the unhallowed and ridiculous developments connected with spirit-circle manœuvreing, it might be furnished them by such instances as the following: A person with whom we were acquainted, who had been a spirit medium while in an unconverted state, afterwards experienced a change of heart by the regenerating power of the Spirit of God; and thenceforth ceasing to be recognised as a spirit medium, she could no longer perform what she once had the power of performing. After conversion there appeared to be too much of the sacred presence of God about the person for the wicked one to be able to exert that control over her physical and mental powers which he had been able to exert previous to her conversion. We can vouch for the truth of this, because it is a case that came under our own observation, having seen the lady act as a medium previous to her conversion, and also attempt it without success on more than one occasion afterwards.

We would not be dogmatic on the subject, however. A change in the state of the lady's health may have had the effect of modifying the electric current, and diminishing the magnetic, or psychic power, as it has been called, with

[1] Matt. xxv. 46; xiii. 50; Mark ix. 43, 44; Isa. xxxiii. 14; Luke xvi. 23–25; John v. 28; Rev. xiv. 9–11; xx. 10–15; xxi. 8.

which in her capacity of spirit medium the supposed spirit phenomena is believed by some to be connected. Science is at work among these spirit circle seances, investigating and endeavouring to explain on natural principles their peculiar developments; but whether, even in a scientific point of view, it will succeed in altogether disconnecting them from spirit agency, is a question. And whether it shall come to be thus regarded scientifically or not, certain it is that the whole movement as connected with *Satanic* agency, in common with every other delusive moral and religious movement, will never be disproved; and for the plain reason that such Satanic connection *as to its delusive moral and religious aspects and bearings*, is an established fact based on the Word of One who knows, and whose Word, it will be admitted, may be safely credited. In any case, then, *as a religious movement*, whose acknowledged aim is to supersede the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, nothing is surer than that it has for its instigator and leading supporter the father of lies, the devil.

CHAPTER XXI.

Personality of Satan.

NOTHER gentleman of a "rationalistic" turn of mind, not being quite satisfied with my reply to Mr. Y. on "The Personality of Satan," wrote me a private letter on the subject, and the following is the substance of my reply to it:—

You think there is a strong tendency in me "to interpret the Scriptures literally." This I freely acknowledge, and should be sorry indeed to possess a "tendency" to do otherwise. That many passages of Scripture are to be understood figuratively, is, of course, undeniable; but to suppose that Scripture, which is the revelation of God's will to man, is to be generally so interpreted, is not only at variance with the dictates of sound reason, but is the height of absurdity, and a reflection upon the wisdom of its Author. The Bible is a practical book, designed to furnish mankind with practical information and instruction relative to their highest interests both for time and eternity; and even the parabolical and figurative it contains are invariably representations of the literal and the real. It will be admitted that no nonsense comes from God; for every figurative description, therefore, there must be a corresponding actual: but supposing, for instance, the event narrated in reference to the devils "entering the swine" be figurative—as the "tendency" in you to figurative interpre-

tation leads you to suppose—what possible event in human history or experience, may I ask, does it represent? or what possible relation has such a narration, if figurative, to human morals? You cannot form a rational conception of any. Reason, therefore, unbiassed, must here decide in favour of the literal. And so, if we consult reason and common sense, must the narrative of events throughout the entire inspired volume be understood, except where there are manifest indications of the figurative. And if any passage when viewed separately, appears doubtful, then its import must be determined by a reference to other passages having either a direct or an indirect relation to the same subject.

By these common sense rules we are to be guided in the interpretation of all Scripture; and being so guided, we are inevitably driven to the conclusion that the swine of the Scripture narrative were literally possessed with the spirits of devils, and actually drowned as the consequence. By such an exigesis, we are also driven to the conclusion, that, as in Job's case, power is sometimes actually given to Satan. under certain restrictions, to control the elements within a limited sphere, and to work other miracles for the accomplishment of certain Divine purposes for which, as instruments or agents, under God, from their depraved natures they are doubtless well fitted. Men may quibble and try to deceive themselves as they please, but with the Word of God in our hands there is no denying the fact, that God does thus use fallen spirits instrumentally. God's own people are frequently tried, and punished or afflicted for their good through their instrumentality. And they are ever ready, as they are peculiarly fitted, to exercise their malicious power against the people of God—against the persons or property of the righteous and godly; and the

more righteous and upright in heart they are, the more eager are they to make their malicious onsets upon them, as we see in Satan's dealings with upright Job.

It is vain for men to call this matter of history into question; for that the events actually transpired, God's Word, legitimately interpreted, positively declares, and any other than a literal interpretation would be nothing short of sheer nonsense. We may go further. With this example before us, it would not be unreasonable to suppose that this is but a sample of what He has done of a similar nature, both before and since. Looking at the event as described, it appears to us to very closely resemble natural occurrences as they take place from time to time—not, it may be, of so marked a character, because they are not designed to be recorded as Scripture examples. Apart from the revelation of Scripture, had we been eye-witnesses to the event as it occurred in Job's experience, we should not have seen in it any violence done by an invisible power to the customary and regular operation of nature's laws. We should simply have seen but the ruin of a rich man and his family attended with remarkably calamitous circumstances, but all apparently in accordance with the unobstructed working of the laws by which natural events are governed. There was first his property stolen by the Sabean and Chaldean bands of robbers; then destroyed by the falling of fire, or the lightning, from heaven; next the calamitous death of his children from the fall of a house, occasioned by a strong wind; and, finally, the breaking out upon his body of a well-known disease.

Who has not known, or read of men, and even whole families, who, from some cause, have been visited with judgments or calamities of a kindred character, only varying, of course, in detail. The spiritual agency, whether

angelic or diabolical, by which God inflicts His judgments on either individuals or nations, is, of course, none the less present because it is invisible. The Scripture has, in Job's case, doubtless, simply furnished us with an example of what is and ever has been going on and taking place above and around us. It is but what is usually styled God's providence, the executing of His judgments and mercies in the earth; and, according to His Word, He is pleased to execute them through both angelic and satanic agencies, instrumentally. Pope's couplet,

> "The first Almighty Cause,
> Acts not by partial, but by general laws,"

may sound very fine in poetry, but it denies God's particular providence. It implies that when God first established those general laws, He decreed that they should invariably take their general course, without being interfered with by the particular interventions of His providence. But who gave man authority to make so bold an assertion? The opposite may be as boldly asserted, and as plausibly maintained by the principles of reason and observation. But this matter is not left to be settled by unaided human reason. The "first Almighty Cause" has settled the matter Himself by a Divine Revelation. He therein shows, that as the great whole necessarily includes the individual parts, so the general laws include and are constantly modified by the particular—that it was no more, nor sooner, decreed that general laws should be established in the economy of creation, redemption, &c., than that particular laws, or, in other words, the particular and unceasing interposition of His providence, should also be established to modify and regulate those general laws so as to secure an illimitable succession of particular, and, in the Divine

mind, clearly defined results. It thus appears, no less from reason than from Scripture that Job's experience is the result of the special interposition of God's providence.

But whether Job's trial be classed with remarkable providences or with miracles properly so called, it is all the same so far as the "delegated power," of which you speak, is concerned. It is as easy for God to delegate power to an angel or a devil as to a human being; and in Job's case, no greater degree of power would be required, and in no other sense would it need to be delegated than as it was delegated to Moses who drew water with a rod from the rock, Elijah who commanded fire to descend from heaven, or the apostles who healed the sick and brought to life the dead, all through the controlling or reversing of the customary order of nature's laws. Good and bad men, good and evil angels, the elements with the laws appertaining thereto, are all God's servants or agents, and according to His Word, He employs and governs them all no less in accordance with the immutable principles of righteousness, than "according to the good pleasure of His will."

I "have given to the devil," you say, "not only powers of speech but also of locomotion;" but you will please observe that it is not I who have given it him, but God; and I merely quote God's own Word to prove it. The common sense method of understanding and interpreting the passage, "Walketh about as a roaring lion," is not that he walks about as a human being walks, but with the locomotive powers peculiar to a spirit. And when we speak of the personality of the devil, we do not refer to any particular form as distinguishing him from other spiritual beings. This we can have no conception of, except as confined to material bodies such as we possess. Material bodies, or

the appearance of them, at God's bidding, spirits can, of course, assume, and so appear to us, as they have done when any important mission was to be accomplished. But you have, I observe, fallen into the very glaring error of confounding personality of existence with a "personal form." You quote Christ's words to prove that because "a spirit has not flesh and blood," as He had, therefore it has no personal existence; as though there could be no personality except as connected with a material form or body. Christ's simply saying that "a spirit has not flesh and blood," is a very different thing, I should say, from saying that "a spirit has no personality or personal existence." Why, in that case—Scripture and reason to the contrary, notwithstanding—God Himself, being a Spirit, has no personality, nor any of the angels, nor the disembodied spirits of just men who, it is declared, are "made perfect" in their individual and personal identity, and this previous to the resurrection of the body! The definition of a "person" is, "One who exercises the functions of a rational, intelligent nature;" and of "personality,"—"That which constitutes individuality, or that which constitutes an individual intelligence a distinct person"—not a human intelligence merely, but any existing individual intelligence. Hence the correctness of their application to Satan; and hence also the Almighty, Who is a Spirit, is in this sense a person, or rather, a trio of persons mysteriously constituting a Trinity in Unity.

Allow a remark or two, by the way, in reference to this Scripturally asserted triune personality of the Deity. One God in three persons is a mystery which some men think they cannot fathom, and hence they reject the doctrine of the Trinity. Well now, that they cannot fathom this mys-

terious doctrine, is, we think, by no means strange. To us, at least, it is not at all "mysterious" that they should discover, or think they discover, in it something incomprehensible; it would rather be a mystery if they did not. It is, however, a doctrine of the Bible, clearly taught, and this ought to be enough for them. But to those who believe in the existence of God at all—and those who do not, we have simply to again refer to clause No. 1, of Psalm xiv.—but to those who believe in the Divine existence, and at the same time reject the doctrine of the Trinity on the ground of its mysteriousness, I would say, Let the following plain and easily understood question for ever convince you, that your position is inconsistent, irrational, and wholly untenable: Which, allow me to ask, is the greatest mystery, the *fact* of the Deity's *eternal unoriginated existence*, or the mere mode, form, or personal character such existence assumes, or is declared to possess? There is a magnitude connected with the mysteriousness of the bare fact of the Divine existence, which exceeds the mysteriousness of the mere *mode* by an immeasurable degree. Admitting the former, then, be rational, be consistent, and do not stumble at the latter.

You think that "the only devil or evil spirit in the world is the one which men make for themselves by deeds of wickedness against the admonitions of conscience—an outraged conscience;" and that the terms, "Satan, Prince, Devils," etc., are purely figurative expressions. Then the Devil, or leader-in-chief, we may suppose was some great act of wickedness, and his angels a lot of little ones—petty offences, and in subjection to the crowning one, since the latter is said to be their Prince—"prince of the devils," and "prince of the power of the air"—a princely act of wicked-

ness flying through the air, and controlling and directing legions of minor wicked acts, all floating up and down in the same element!

A remarkable phenomenon, no doubt, but no more strange, however, than the breaking of strong fetters and chains by the possessed man among the tombs, since the superhuman power was put forth, not by superhuman beings, but by the "outraged conscience" of the man, or by his "wicked deeds" as so many devils possessing him! Nor is it any more strange than for men's "wicked deeds," or "outraged consciences," to be cast out of them, and be sent into the herd of swine. No wonder that the sudden twinges of conscience and burden of guilt from their wickedness, gave the poor things so much trouble of mind as to immediately induce them to contemplate suicide! How absurd must be the theory that necessarily leads to such conclusions. You cannot but see that, viewing the subject from a Scripture standpoint (and no other is admissible, this being the only true one), there would be no end to absurdity were we to entertain so groundless an assumption as you and those of your creed have set forth. It is impossible to avoid it; you are involved in its mazes at every turn you take.

Your "outraged conscience"—although in a restricted sense it may be said to be sometimes "a hell within man's breast," and destined as a part of his punishment, to be "a gnawing worm" of torment to him for ever—is certainly not the Scriptural devil which was cast out of heaven, and with whose personal influence and temptations we, while probationers upon the earth, have to do. It is a notorious fact, verified no less by observation than by Scripture, that the wickedest of men frequently become past feeling any per-

ceptible degree of compunction or remorse in this life on account of sin—"having," in the expressive language of Scripture, "their consciences seared as with a hot iron." This is the rule; and it renders your fine-spun theory about man's "hell being within," and their consciences and wicked deeds being their only devils, rotten at the core.

There is no occasion to expunge from the Gospel by St. Mark the passage, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; in My Name shall they cast out devils, speak with other tongues, lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover, take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them"—in order to our being able to give a satisfactory answer to the question, "Can you assign any reason why 'believers' of the present day cannot also cast out devils?" In the first place, your imaginary devils—the wickedness in men with their troubled consciences—"believers" of the present day, instrumentally, through an invocation of the Divine presence and power, do cast out of men. And if it be the case, as you say, that "some men's outraged consciences give them no rest day nor night, and even rack their souls and bodies with indescribable pains and torments," who is to say that such men are not actually possessed with devils? Neither you nor any other man can say so. The utmost you can say is, that you do not believe them to be possessed. But the believer in the Bible—the true "believer"—can go so far as to say, *We know* that some men, at least in the past, have been thus possessed, because it is positively asserted in the Divine Word, and in such unmistakable terms that none may reasonably deny or call it into question. Why, in the exercise of those "reasoning powers" of which you speak, unwarped by preconceived antiscriptural notions, do you not perceive

that even every man who is "led captive by the devil at *his will*," must be more or less possessed? There are, without doubt, different kinds and degrees of actual possession. But if it be so that believers cannot now cast out devils from those who are possessed with them (as many who are now confined within lunatic asylums may be) it is for precisely the same reason that they cannot now speak with new tongues, perform miracles of healing, etc. The "signs" referred to did actually "follow them that believed" in apostolic times. Not that all believers could even then perform these miracles, as we gather from the fact that "the disciples" had to send for Peter, before Tabitha, who had died, could be again restored to life.[1] But some of the early disciples of our Lord were endowed with miraculous gifts, inasmuch as following Christ's resurrection, they did speak with other tongues, restore the dead to life, lay hands on the sick and healed them, and in one instance, at least, handled a poisonous serpent without being hurt by it, as we gather from the Acts of the Apostles—not as a mere personal and presumptive test of their faith, however, as you would put it, for this would be to tempt God, as Christ Himself informs us. Whether the persecutors of the Apostles ever administered poison to them or not, we know that they did not die from its effects (as did the false prophet Mahommed), first, because the Bible declares that they should not, and, secondly, because history and tradition are against it. They doubtless said, did, and suffered many things that we have no account of; "but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus [who empowered them] is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through His Name."

The miracles of apostolic and primitive times were designed

[1] Acts ix. 38.

as a Divine attestation of Christianity when it was first introduced; and this object being accomplished, there was, of course, no further need for their continuance. Indeed, were they continued to the present, they would cease to be regarded as miracles, but would be looked upon as ordinary occurrences, as are revivals of religion and the diversified operations of the Spirit, which are now by the great Head of the Church judged to be sufficient to accomplish the end for which miracles were originally designed. This, then, is my reply to your question relative to the casting out of devils by "believers" of the present day.

The views of certain "bishops and other good men," of whom you speak, in reference to the power and works of Satan, do not justify you in coming to the conclusion that "if he exists he must be omnipotent and omnipresent," seeing the Scriptures assert the contrary, and the Bible—which is not simply *a* Word of God, as you would have it, but emphatically *the* Word of God—is, of course, our sole guide in such matters. The book of nature of which you speak is good enough in itself, properly interpreted, respecting matters coming within its legitimate province; but to us it is a perfectly blank book respecting everything that it is of the highest importance for us to know. It reveals absolutely nothing respecting futurity, our origin, destiny, or the will and purposes of God concerning us. The works of creation are the works of God, showing His power, majesty, wisdom, and something of His goodness; but they are not *the Word* of God, as is the Bible; nor are they to be regarded as *a* Word of God to man as an immortal and accountable being, nor as to any matters pertaining exclusively to the spirit world, and with which we, as candidates for eternity, are connected.

The power and influence of Satan, although represented to be very great and extensive, are nevertheless restrained within certain limits and controlled by the power and will of God. And as to his "omnipresence," it is but a small portion of illimitable space that is occupied by our earth and its surroundings. If, therefore, it could be made to appear that his powers of vision and influence extend to every part of the earth at one and the same time, this would come very far short of proving him to be endowed with the attribute of omnipresence, which he is certainly not endowed with, since he is a created, and therefore a finite being. His sphere of operations at present circumscribed is, according to Scripture, destined to be still more so. But what the powers and attributes are which Satan possesses—whether in relation to himself as a fallen angel, or which he possesses in common with all other spiritual beings—we can have no conception of, except, indeed, as it is revealed to us in God's Word. He may be able to pass through the regions of space allotted him with lightning speed. His angels also, having the same power as active emissaries and coadjutors, are, doubtless, sufficiently numerous to give him, so far as our earth is concerned, all the omnipresence required for the execution of all his plots and purposes as the chosen god of the greater part of this fallen world. His powers of locomotion and of vision, in common with all spirits, are also, without doubt, unobstructed by material substances; so that he may be able to scan the earth at a glance, and see in a moment what is going on in any part of it. We are not to suppose that these are attributes peculiar to Deity, for there is good reason to believe, both from Scripture and from human experience, that they are common to all spirits. Experiments made relative to the internal or spiritual vision of

the clairvoyant, show that the human spirit, even while encased in its "clay tenement," can, under certain conditions, through the power of animal magnetism acting, as it appears, on the nervous connection between the soul and the body, discern objects, and take cognizance of what is going on, in distant parts of the earth—as the experiments of Dr. Haddock and others satisfactorily prove. But whatever view may be taken of this, the "omnipresence" of the "adversary of our souls," as based on the extent and character of his works, is certainly unfounded and imaginary.

We have hitherto purposely omitted the name of our friend M. Renan in connection with this discussion, because he has not, I believe, in a single instance attempted to argue the question, but has contented himself with the bare enunciation of a few naked assertions, such as—"Jesus declared that in the present world evil is the reigning power, and that 'Satan is the prince of this world.'"[1] Again: "Jesus on this point differed in no respect from His companions. He believed in the devil, whom He regarded as a kind of evil genius. An abode in the desert of Judea was generally considered as the preparation for great things—as a sort of 'retreat' before public acts. Jesus followed in this respect the example of others, and passed forty days with no other companions than savage beasts, maintaining a rigorous fast."[2] And in a note on page 106, referring to Christ's temptation as recorded by Mark, he adds: "The meagre and concise narrative of Mark, which evidently represents on this point the primitive compilation, leads us to suppose a real fact, which furnished later the theme of legendary developments." The *fact* of our Lord's temptation, then, is here conceded. But with all his brevity of narration in this "primitive compilation," Mark expressly tells us that

[1] Page 106. [2] Pp. 59, 104.

Jesus was "in the wilderness forty days, tempted *of Satan*;"[1] and which in his case could not possibly have meant a mere personification of the principle of evil, for in Christ no such principle existed. Christ, moreover, was "in the wilderness" at the time, quite away from the busy, tempting world, where the principle of evil might be said to be at work. Moral evil was not, of course, to be found in the wilderness; nor did He carry it there with Him, for He was immaculate; and since He was there to be *tempted* of this "power of evil," it must necessarily have been through the presence and influence of a spiritual intelligence, and an intelligence at enmity with God, hostile to man, and utterly averse to all good.

The sinlessness of Christ, together with His Godhead, we have proved, we trust, to the entire satisfaction of candour and reason, in the foregoing pages. But, says Renan, "No devil ever tempted Him except that which every man carries within him;" that is, an evil heart—a heart that is prone to do wickedly "as the sparks are to fly upwards." Thank you for the admission, M. Renan. It is the only connection, if I mistake not, in which you have made any approach to it; and it is the only connection, allow me to say, in which the admission could possibly involve a mistake, but into that very one, poor, spiritually unfortunate man that you are, it is your misfortune, as usual, to have fallen. Christ is the only exception to this rule, which otherwise is of universal application. He carried no evil heart within, for He was perfectly holy, perfectly sinless; and therefore *His* temptation *must* have come from without, which fact is of itself an unanswerable argument in proof of Satan's spiritual and personal existence, and a sufficient refutation of the silly notions

[1] Mark i. 13.

which some men entertain in reference to the devil of Scripture.

As to the *design* of our Lord's temptation—He was in this, as in all other things, an example to believers. Being Himself tempted, He vanquished the adversary, and thereby affords consolation and encouragement to His tempted followers, seeing "He is able also to succour them that are tempted;"[1] and the more so, as He "was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin."[2] His temptations were based on the *sufferings* and *desires* of human nature. Satan's fiercest temptations are, I believe, in general directed against those who are most like Christ, and who are most devoted to the interests of His cause; and, as in Christ's case, Satan is ever most artful and crafty in the choice and occasion of a temptation. He adapts the temptation exactly to the state and circumstances in which the believer is found. Being hungry and weak, perhaps through fasting, the suffering child of God, in common with his Maker, may expect a visit from his adversary, as being a fitting moment for an attack. At a time of great fatigue and prostration, whether of mind or of body, he will be very apt to draw near; also at a time of worldly affliction and loss, when he should be specially guarded against. And just as the temptation of Jesus followed the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him, so after special illumination and spiritual blessing, we would say to the believer, Look out for the tempter. Is the Christian, like his Master, poor? on occasions when he is most likely to feel the dire effects of his poverty, he may expect a visit from the adversary, tempting him, by suggestion, to discontent and to murmurings at the allotments of Providence. Is he comparatively rich? he may see in Satan's suggesting to his Master a desire for

[1] Heb. ii. 18. [2] Heb. iv. 15.

"the kingdoms of this world," a clue to the suggestions of vain-glory, ambition, and extended desire, which sometimes arise in his mind, and in reference to the possession of which the adversary flatters him with very fair promises, if he will but "fall down and worship him" in the love of aggrandizement, mammon, and the glory of this world. Is he conscious of being "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," and that he is immovably fixed upon the rock Christ Jesus? he may see in his Master's temptation from the adversary to presumption—"If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down"—that a similar temptation may await himself, and take warning accordingly. Christ resisted the devil. He did not, in His character of human exemplar, "tempt God" by presuming upon His protection, even though He might be found out of "God's ways." He "will keep thee in all thy ways," Christian; but your ways, remember, are Christian ways. If you presumptuously leave those ways, and unnecessarily mingle with an ungodly world, be not surprised if your presumption leads you to drink in of its spirit, and to desire what its votaries desire; and thus, forsaking by degrees your first love, and checking your further growth in grace, bring yourself into condemnation and a snare, among the foils of which, the longer it is persisted in, the more intricately entangled will you become, and the more hopeless, therefore, will your case be so far as it concerns your faithful, happy, and fruitful devotion to the cause of Christ. The Holy Spirit, if not wholly "quenched," will thereby be much "grieved," and you will have cause, therefore, for future painful repentance, with much anguish of soul.

Secker says: "To pray against temptations, and yet rush into occasions, is to thrust your fingers into the fire, and

then pray that they might not be burnt." God will, as He has promised, "with every temptation provide a way of escape;" but if we refuse to walk in it, and choose rather to run further into the way of temptation, by extending our worldly connections and pursuits, then, if we fall from grace and the spiritual enjoyment which we habitually realise from a consciousness of our union with and likeness to Christ, we have no one to blame but ourselves. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," is the warning voice of God to all who are at any time thus exposed to the temptations of the adversary.

The Divine ends contemplated by a continuance of Satan's agency in the world are, doubtless, that he may be instrumental in tempting or proving all men, aid in inflicting the disciplinary corrections of God upon His people, and in the infliction of His just judgments upon the wicked. An important consideration in connection with this subject, however, is, that if there is an evil spirit tempting men to sin, there is also a good spirit among men wooing them to the love and practice of righteousness. So that in view of this counteracting agency, voluntary man is left wholly without excuse if he follow the suggestions of his adversary in preference to those of his Divine Friend, the Holy Ghost. Unlike the ruler of darkness, this Divine Spirit is unlimited in the attributes of wisdom and of power. No excuse, therefore, for a continuance in sin. Satan is powerful to tempt and allure, but he is not a match for Omnipotence; and Omnipotence to enable us to overcome is ours if we choose. The Holy Ghost, the Good Spirit that convinces of sin, and lures us to the practice of holiness, is God, equal with the Father, and the Son; and He says unto all, "Come." And if we come, His strength and grace will

prove sufficient to enable us to conquer Satan, self, and the world.

In bringing this subject to a close, allow me to ask, If the existence of Satan as a spiritual adversary is a fact capable of the most logical demonstration, as we have seen, from every part of the Divine Word, does it not behove us as rational beings to resolutely bring ourselves face to face with the fact, and in our spiritual warfare to study well the character, and never lose sight of the tactics of this secret invisible foe, as revealed to us by Him, the God of love and mercy, who calls, and justly calls, Himself our Friend? But some there may be who are still ready to say, "I cannot believe such a doctrine." Well, in that case, all we can say is, that to such the words of inspiration are applicable, "What if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith [or truth] of God without effect? God forbid."[1]

For about six thousand years, it is undeniable that God has suffered evil to exist in our world, and work out its legitimate issues, misery untold, and torment in the aggregate incalculable. The goodness and mercy of God, on which some men delight so much to dwell to the exclusion of His justice, have not prevented this. Let them, then, in this behold a foreshadowing of the torment which is to be of everlasting continuance in the world primarily prepared for the Devil and his angels. The merciful God did not make this world as it is; but His mercy and goodness have suffered, and will continue to suffer it to remain with more or less of evil in it till the time of its definitely fixed probationary period be accomplished. Nor will evil then cease to be. It will still be suffered to go on working out its legitimate issues, but with this difference, its *locale* will be in a world of punishment instead of a world of probation, and,

[1] Romans iii. 3.

consequently, will then experience no let or hindrance in its efforts to work out for itself the mightiest results of misery that it is its nature to achieve!

Finite minds will ever have reason to exclaim, "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"[1] But although the scheme of God's moral government, as embracing the existence of evil, may at present be beyond our comprehension, when the present and the future of our probation shall have passed, and the final consummation of all things have come, we shall doubtless be able to comprehend much more of the plan of the Divine moral government than we now do. That which to us is at present dark and incomprehensible, will then be made plain, and the evidences of its wisdom and rectitude, as clear to our minds as the noonday. Come, then, sceptics of the past, lay aside prejudice, unbelief, and unreasonableness, and give unhesitating credence to this and all other holy doctrines of the Bible; for this Divine plan of redeeming and restoring a fallen world, remember, is a plan deep laid in the eternal counsels of God, and therefore, whether in its several parts or its entirety, it is infinitely wise, infinitely good, and infinitely reasonable.

[1] Romans xi. 33.

CHAPTER XXII.

Observations on Various Quotations.

AMONG the many phases of Christ's teaching to which M. Renan takes exception, we may mention the following as being one, in addition to those already noticed, the spiritual bearing of which he evidently fails to comprehend. "Jesus," he says, "made no concession to necessity. He boldly preached war against nature, and total severance from the ties of blood. Despising the healthy limits of man's nature, He demanded that he should exist only for Him, that he should love Him alone. 'If any man come to Me,' said He, 'and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.'"[1] Renan here quite overlooks the fact that this "war against nature" is to be proclaimed only when and where nature and "the ties of blood" stand in the way of receiving or propagating the kingdom of God. In no other sense and for no other reason did Christ preach it. And as to hating "wife and children," etc., whom we are elsewhere commanded to love, it must be clear, one would think, to all but a Renan, that the original of the word rendered "hate" in this passage must have been used *comparatively* to convey the idea of loving them less than Jesus, which eminent critics tell us is the case.[2] The word as here employed should convey about the same idea as is ex-

[1] Page 222. [2] See Bishop Pearce and Dr. Clarke on this passage.

pressed in Matthew x. 37—"He that loveth father or mother *more than Me* is not worthy of Me;" thus giving Christ as our Saviour, Lord, and God, the highest seat in our hearts, and the preference in all things, even to wife and children and to life itself, ever forsaking all in spirit for Christ which leads to its literal relinquishment, with cheerful and hopeful resignation, if circumstances require. And in making the sacrifice thus required, through the mercy and kindness of God toward us we have the promise and the possession of manifold more peace and true joy here, and in the world to come "life everlasting" with eternal glory in the Paradise of God.

"The transcendent idealism of Jesus," M. Renan further remarks, "never permitted Him to have a very clear notion of His own personality. He is Father, His Father is He. No one could know the Father except through Him. . . . The title, Son of man, expressed His character as Judge; that of Son of God, His power and His participation in the supreme designs. Intoxicated with infinite love, He forgot the heavy chain which holds the spirit captive; He cleared at one bound the abyss, impossible to most, which the weakness of the human faculties has created between God and man."[1] Not at all, Renan, not at all, He did not "forget" it; His language was quite consistent with the perfect knowledge He had of His high original. Please to allow Himself to know best what He was, and whether or not there was an infinite distance between Himself and the Deity. Please to allow that He may have been quite as capable of judging of Himself and how to express that judgment, as Monsieur Renan is of judging and expressing it for Him. M. Renan "forgets," or quite overlooks the fact, that between Christ and God no such infinite "abyss,"

[1] Pp. 182, 183.

as he speaks of, exists. He tells us, however, as we have before observed, that "the universal conscience has styled Jesus the Son of God, and justly so."[1] But why *justly so?* Why "because," he goes on to say, "He has done more to establish religion on the earth than any other man ever did, or probably ever will do." But why, Renan, if He was but a man, say, "probably more than any other man ever will do?" Why not, to use your own words, "have a larger idea of the powers which nature conceals in her bosom?" You have had successively arising your *Cakya-Mounis*, to whom you have referred as religious founders of the past, and between whom and Jesus you have instituted a comparison; then why not another arise still more enlightened and powerful than either of the preceding? Reasoning from analogy, there must surely be some human prodigy of greatness and power lying in the womb of the future, who will yet arise as the founder of a religion which shall more fully comport with our advanced civilization and enlightenment. If the "universal conscience" must have a religion, surely the eternity that is before us will not be behind the eternity that is past in giving birth to religious founders corresponding with the advanced requirements of the progressive future.

As a good distance of time has intervened since the last founder of a religion arose, and our philosopher, at least in some respects, regards himself as superior to our Lord Himself, perhaps it would not be amiss for the "universal conscience" to direct its eye towards M. Renan, as the founder and teacher of a religion suited to the present advanced wants of the world. But will it, does he think? Ah, he knows right well it will not, nor to any other; and by this time, it is to be hoped that, like many other haters

[1] Page 45.

of the truth, he has at least a secret misgiving that Jesus Christ, who by the "universal conscience" has been styled the "Son of God," is really the Son of God, in the evangelical sense of the term, and that therefore another will never arise on whom the universal conscience will be fixed. But why does he question the reasonableness of a Divine Teacher having arisen, and of prophets, apostles, etc., inspired and commissioned by God to reveal His Will to man respecting the religion best adapted to his wants, and which the Divinely implanted universal conscience, craving, may rest upon, and be satisfied? Putting it to the test of human reason, which, I ask, is the more reasonable of the two, that God, who made man a worshipping creature, should reveal to the intelligent worshipping world His Will in the matter, or that He should leave them wholly in the dark respecting the nature of the legitimate Object of their worship, and of the form and character such worship should assume? The "universal conscience," universal reason, and universal common sense, will certainly pronounce in favour of the former, philosopher Renan to the contrary notwithstanding.

"It is unnecessary to remark," observes Renan, "how remote from the thought of Jesus was the idea of a religious book, containing a code of articles of faith. Not only did He not write, but it was contrary to the spirit of the infant sect to produce sacred books."[1] To show how very inconsistent M. Renan is in this last remark, we need but refer the reader to our chapter on the authenticity of the Gospels, and to quotations in other parts of this work, where he acknowledges that they had the Scriptures of the Old and now abolished dispensation as a precedent, and also that the Apostles commenced writing such books within a very short time of the death of our Lord. And as to its being "remote from the

[1] Page 214.

thoughts of Jesus" while dwelling with His disciples, we read that in His intercessory character He prayed for those who should afterwards believe on Him through their word; that He said of the woman who had anointed Him with precious ointment, "Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her,"[1] which certainly implies that a written record of such events was not remote from the mind of Jesus; and in the Apocalypse we read that He gave His servant, the Apostle John, an express command relative to the Book which contained His written revelations.[2] But what passed between Himself and His apostles on this subject while He was with them, it is impossible to say. Mark writes that, "when they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples;"[3] and from John xxi. 25, and other passages, we gather that Jesus both did and said "many things" which were left unrecorded. Suffice it, however, to say, that the Apostle of the Gentiles tells us that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God;"[4] that Peter recognized Paul's Epistles as Scripture, and classed them with the "other Scriptures,"[5] and which were therefore written and recognized as the Word of inspiration not only before Peter's death, but before he wrote his own Epistle; that no revelation or event of sacred history can be called Scripture until it is recorded in a book; and, that therefore, all Scripture being given by inspiration of God, the writing of sacred books was not only contemplated by the Divine mind, but every sentence of them, being Scripture, was written under the direct inspiration and infallible guidance of the Divine Spirit—quite as surely as that the Apostles spoke by the immediate inspira-

[1] Mark xiv. 9. [2] Rev. ii. 1; xxii. 10. [3] Mark iv. 34.
[4] 2 Tim. iii. 16. [5] 2 Pet. iii. 16.

tion of God when they "spake with other tongues," and when upon other occasions, according to the teaching of Jesus, it was not they that spoke, but, as He said to His disciples, "the Spirit of their Father that spake in them;"[1] and St. Paul—"not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."[2]

In the same discriminating tone, and, in view of the Divinity of Christ so plainly demonstrable from the Word of God, with a degree of assurance the folly of which might raise a smile even in the gravest but for the gravity of the subject, he proceeds to tell us that, "Although born at a time when the principle of positive science was already proclaimed, Jesus knew nothing of this progress. He lived entirely in the supernatural. That He had no knowledge of the general state of the world is apparent from each feature of His most authentic discourses. He knew nothing beyond Judaism; His mind preserved that free innocence which an extended and varied culture always weakens"[3]—Our philosopher gives this as an inference which he draws from the observation of our Lord, "Behold they which are gorgeously apparalled, and live delicately, are in kings courts." A very just and obvious inference, is it not?—"It is doubtful," he further observes, "if He understood the Hebrew writings in their original tongue. It is not probable that Jesus knew Greek." But enough of such nonsense! How ridiculous it sounds to a Christian's ear! He "by whom the worlds were made," and Who is the Governor of the universe, having "all power in heaven and in earth," knew nothing beyond Judaism! He of whom it is written that He knew what was in the minds of men before it was uttered, He who could read the thought of the heart in whatever language or tongue it may have been conceived,

[1] Matt. x. 20. [2] 1 Cor. ii. 13. [3] Pages 55-59.

was, nevertheless, in the judgment of M. Renan, probably not able to read Hebrew or understand Greek!

M. Renan's remarks relative to the Baptist's intercourse with Jesus are equally profound. "John's last act towards Jesus," he says, "had effectually united the two schools in the most intimate bonds. . . . The school of John did not die with its founder. It lived some time distinct from that of Jesus;" and, in proof, he refers the reader to Acts xviii. 24, and following, and xix. 1–5. And, as a further logical deduction based on the reading of these passages, he adds: "Seeing that his school continued to exist a considerable time parallel with the Christian Churches, we are led to think that, notwithstanding his regard for Jesus, John did not look upon Him as the one who was to realize the divine promises."[1] Now, if instead of most absurdly drawing this inference from these passages in the Acts, he had drawn it from John's message to Jesus about whether He were really the Christ or not, there would have been some show of consistency in it; for, notwithstanding it is a recorded fact that "John bare record of Him, saying, "Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all."[2] And again: "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I, indeed, have baptized you with water: but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost."[3] And again, when, "to fulfil all righteousness," Jesus came to be baptized of him, John said, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?"[4]—notwithstanding it is a recorded fact that John thus bore record of

[1] Page 153–157. [2] John iii. 28–31. [3] Mark i. 7, 8. [4] Matt. iii. 14.

Him, it is true that a gloomy cloud of unbelief seems to have come over him when lying in the prison in which he had been confined by Herod, arising, perhaps, from the suggestion of the adversary that if Jesus were really the true Messiah, supposing Him to be a temporal as well as a spiritual Deliverer, He would surely devise some means of effecting the deliverance of his recognized forerunner from the hands of his enemy, the King. But this temptation, arising probably from a mistaken idea as to the two-fold nature of Christ's Kingdom, was doubtless of short duration, and was wholly dispelled by the return of His disciples with the assuring message from Jesus, "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see. . . . And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me."[1]

As a further illustration of Renan's logical acumen, we give the following: "Tradition in fact," he says, "attributes to Jesus two entirely opposite rules of proselytism, which He may have practised in turn: 'He that is not against us, is on our part.' 'He that is not with Me, is against Me.' Impassioned conflict involves almost necessarily this kind of contradictions."[2] Our logical philosopher, it appears, thinks he has discovered a contradiction in this passage. Well, it may be because we have not had the advantage of a rationalistic training, and have therefore not been able to explore the secret depths whence rationalistic logic proceeds: but viewing the passage in the ordinary common sense or reasonable (not to say rationalistic) light, we take the one to be simply explanatory of the other—the one affirming that those who are not against are with; and the other, that all *are* against who are not with. No middle ground can be taken: we are all either active friends of Christ, or enemies.

[1] Matt. xi. 4, 6. [2] Page 173.

We have seen in a previous paragraph what M. Renan has had to say in reference to "the ideas of the poor but honest man" judging the world. We have now to consider another light in which he views the poor man, and which he professes to have also gathered from the teaching of Jesus. Unfortunately for him, however, instead of our having merely to explain the terms of a Scripture passage which he imagined to involve a contradiction, as in the passage preceding, in addition to its utter perversion of the true teaching of Jesus, we have to give the reader another specimen of his own extraordinary liability to make contradictory statements. "Like all great men," Renan says, "Jesus loved the people, and felt Himself at home with them. The Gospel, in His idea, is made for the poor." For "*the poor in spirit*," truly, but not so does M. Renan understand it, for he adds: "Pure Ebionism—that is, the doctrine that the poor (ebionim) alone shall be saved, that the reign of the poor is approaching—was, therefore, the doctrine of Jesus."[1] Now, not to speak of the many places where Renan tells us that Jesus was not a teacher of creed, dogma, or theology, and of their irreconcilability with such statements as, "He was obliged to become controversialist, jurist, exegetist, and *theologian*"[2]—in the passage just quoted, he tells us that "the *doctrine* that the *poor alone* shall be saved, was the doctrine of Jesus;" while on page 127, he tells us that "Of those who followed Him, and constantly ministered unto Him, *some were rich*, and by their fortune enabled the Young Prophet to live without following the trade which He had until then practised." And on page 166, he says: "The charming Teacher forgave *every one* provided they loved Him." And again: "Jesus maintained that every well-disposed man, *every man* who received

[1] Page 143. [2] Page 241.

and loved Him, was a son of Abraham," who, we are told, was Himself *rich*. And then again, to crown all, immediately on making the affirmation that the poor alone, according to the teaching of Jesus, are to be saved, in confirmation of it he quotes the passage, "Then said He also to him that bade Him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." [1] Here, in flagrant contradiction of the assertion he makes, is the case of a rich man who provides a sumptuous feast for the poor, assured by Jesus that he shall be rewarded at the resurrection of the just. How singular that M. Renan should thus confound himself by choosing so apt an illustration of the very truth that falsifies his position, blindly overlooking the fact that to provide a feast for the poor a man must be himself rich; and that, according to Christ's teaching, all who are thus charitable from Christian principles and motives, shall be recompensed in the world to come.

"Christianity," Renan says, "in spite of its failures still reaps the results of its glorious origin. To renew itself it has but to return to the Gospel" [2]—that is, to the Gospel as we have seen it explained by M. Renan! and which originated with Him of whom in company with St. Paul and other leading spirits, he says: "These mighty souls carried a surprising energy into action. They appear to us like the giants of an heroic age, which could not have been real." But how does he account for their surprising energy and

[1] Luke xiv. 12-14. [2] Page 302.

success? Why, because "the breath of God was free in them," he says, while "with us it is restrained by the iron bonds of a mean society."[1] And, let us add, It was because *the power of God* was manifest in them. There was something higher and more potential than the mere "ideal" about them: the Divinity was in them. Their energy and power were substantial, were real. "Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God," was the secret spring of their power, and of the mighty results which have followed their labours. It is because the Founder of our holy Christianity was the Son of God, claiming equality with Him, and was therefore God Himself, since there can be no equality with Deity without being God. Has not M. Renan himself stamped Him with the insignia of Divinity? He has, for example, in many places written of Him such sentiments as the following: "He pronounced for the first time the sentence upon which will repose the edifice of *eternal religion*. He founded the pure worship of all ages and of all lands, that which all elevated souls will practise until the end of time.[2] Not only was His religion on this day the best religion of humanity, it was the *absolute religion;* and if other planets have inhabitants gifted with reason and morality, their religion cannot be different from that which Jesus proclaimed near the well of Jacob."[3] Very true, but saying so, you Deify its founder. It is the work, not of man, but of God.

This pure "Christianity," which St. Paul declares came "not by *man*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," Renan further remarks, "still preserves, after eighteen centuries, the character of a universal and eternal religion. Before Jesus,

[1] Page 305. [2] "*To the end of time.*"—This, coming from one who rejects the Divine authority of the Bible, is, of course, to be regarded as a mere flourish of rhetoric. [3] Page 176.

religious thought had passed through many revolutions; since Jesus, it has made great conquests: but no one has improved, and no one will improve, upon the essential principle Jesus has created; He has fixed for ever the idea of pure worship."[1] Be it so; but all "confessions of faith," we may add, are not "travesties of the idea of Jesus," as Renan in this connection asserts, but interpretations and amplifications of it, compared with which his own "confession of faith"—for he certainly has one—is an impious caricature, and a burlesque on everything sacred and Divine as revealed to the prophets and apostles, and recorded in the Book of God.

Is it not more than a little strange that a man holding the foregoing views relative to the "universal and eternal religion" which Jesus has "created," and which "no one has improved and no one will improve upon," should nevertheless be found entertaining in connection therewith so many opposing and irreconcilable sentiments. As it came from Jesus, he tells us, it had the character of an eternal religion, pure worship, pure Christianity, &c.; but, notwithstanding this character of purity and perfection which he gives to the religion of Jesus, to a multitude of other irreconcilable sentiments, very many of which we have already noticed, he adds: "The immense moral progress which we owe to the Gospel is the result of its exaggerations." Strange that there is no inherent power of a progressive nature to be found in the morality of the Gospel itself, but it must be indebted to "exaggerations, chimeras," and other principles wholly outside of itself, for the wonderful success that has everywhere attended its propagation. It surely speaks little for its Divine original, if truth itself (acknowledged to be such by M. Renan) is so impotent that it can

[1] Page 303.

make no progress except as associated with the potency of error. If immorality is thus indispensably allied to morality, and truth so entirely dependent upon error for its progressive existence, why does M. Renan seek to dissolve the connection between them? Since they have worked so harmoniously and successfully together for so many centuries, why seek to bring about a disruption between them, and thus retard their onward progress? To be consistent with his own principles of moral philosophy, he had much better be silent, and let the twin sisters alone. Where consistency is wholly wanting, however, its exercise cannot be expected.

Whether, however, the "exaggerations" to which M. Renan refers were indispensable to the success of the Gospel or not, it is some satisfaction to know that M. Renan thinks he can discern some gleams of truth intermingled therewith, one of which he tells us is the right of liberty of conscience. "Jesus," he says, "was the founder of the rights of free conscience."[1] To which, however, we would simply reply, that while conscience certainly has a right to civil freedom, Jesus did not make it so free but that it is still bound to be kept "void of offence toward God and man;" and to be kept thus void of offence toward God, it must, of course, be enlightened by God's Word, which cannot be with him who denies that God has given us a written Word. The relation of such a man with God is thus described by St. John: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because *he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.*"[2] And in his second Epistle he further describes the case of such a man by saying: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doc-

[1] Page 263. [2] 1 John v. 10.

trine of Christ, *hath not God.*" Let M. Rénan and others likeminded ponder well the concluding words of this passage.

"The day will come," Renan continues, "when the domain of things spiritual will cease to be called a 'power,' that it may be called a 'liberty.'"[1] This day has already come—the day has long since come in which "things spiritual" were called a "liberty." So called by Christ when in the flesh, it has been echoed and re-echoed by His true followers from that day to the present. Nor will it cease to be the watchword of the Christian in connection with the truth and kingdom of Christ till time shall be no more. But as to "things spiritual" ceasing to be called a "power," in a civil sense they certainly may, but in a spiritual and religious sense, never; for "the kingdom of God," the Apostle says, "is not in word, but in power."[2] And again: "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth,"[3] and is preached, he further says, "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."[4]

Speaking of the freedom allowed men in ancient times, as compared with the interferences and restrictions of the present, Renan says: "Jesus, during three years, could lead a life which in our societies would have brought Him twenty times before the magistrates. Our laws upon the illegal exercise of medicine would alone have sufficed to cut short His career."[5] It is well for the world, then, that He did not live in our day, or the "illegal exercise" of His medical skill might have proved fatal to His divine mission, and the glorious results springing therefrom might never have been achieved. Had it pleased God to have chosen our day for the manifestation of Himself in the flesh, however, perhaps in the recorded history of His life there might still be found

[1] Page 300. [2] 1 Cor. iv. 20. [3] Rom. i. 16. [4] 1 Cor. ii. 4. [5] Page 310.

the words, "No man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come."

In a similar strain he speaks of the prophet Elijah, "presenting himself at the palaces of sovereigns, compelling the sentinels to stand aside, and, with an imperious tone, announcing to kings the approach of revolutions of which he had been the promoter." "The very idea" of such a thing occurring in our day, he says, "provokes a smile." Such, however, he adds, "was Elias; but Elias the Tishbite, in our days, would not be able to pass the gate of the Tuileries."[1] No more likely to, we admit, than that Peter, with the angel for his conductor, "passed the gate" of the prison in which he had been incarcerated. Perhaps, however, if put to the test, one gate would prove no more difficult to open than the other, not even though the reigning power of the French Tuileries might be present to guard it. But modern power is great, no doubt; and perhaps it will one day, be summoned by those in authority, to dispute and resist the mandate of the angel who shall stand "one foot on the sea, and one on solid land," and swear "by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that time shall be no longer!" but, perhaps, when that day arrives (and it will arrive), M. Renan will be constrained to think otherwise.

This privileged "freedom," however, which the ancients enjoyed by reason of the favourable times in which they lived as compared with our own, was not, in our Lord's case at least, of very long continuance; for, speaking of the cruel and unwise policy of the Jews in putting Jesus to death, inasmuch as it defeated their own aims, Renan says: "Left free, Jesus would have exhausted Himself in a desperate struggle with the impossible. The unintelligent

[1] Page 305.

hate of His enemies decided the success of His work, and sealed His *divinity.*"[1] And may we not say, that it is the "*unintelligent hate*" of his nineteenth century enemy to this doctrine, that leads him to vainly attempt to *unseal* "his Divinity?" But as there was not wisdom enough in the Jewish policy to prevent the successful issue of a mission which was Divinely decreed, and which, therefore, went on and terminated exactly as it was written of it; so, neither will the wisdom of a Renan's philosophy, levelled as it is against the Divine person, word, and work of the Messiah, prevent the onward march and successful promulgation of "the truth as it is in Jesus," until it shall have fully accomplished that whereunto it was sent, the spiritual regeneration and eternal salvation of all who shall truly believe in Him as the Deity incarnate, propitiating the sins of a fallen world.

[1] Page 256.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Concluding Observations.

IN concluding our review of M. Renan's work, the idea is forcibly impressed upon our mind that we have had to do with a man about whom there is far too much intellectual pride, too much carnal philosophy to comport with the humility and lowliness which are characteristic of the true religionist, and which were a distinguishing feature in the character of Him whose life he has undertaken to write. His proud mind appears to glory in being a man of science, a philosopher, soaring in intellectual and sceptical revelry above the generality of mankind. He is, in fact, endowed with too large a share of "the wisdom of this world which is foolishness with God," to be a Divinely accredited biographer of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The things pertaining to Christ and His Kingdom being spiritually discerned, it is impossible for a man who is destitute of spiritual discernment to be true to the original.

Renan's general idea of practical morality as taught by Christ, however, such as universal human brotherhood, the love of God, the forgiveness of injuries, etc., appears to be correct enough so far as it goes; but his great and fatal error lies in his persistently disassociating the idea of man's natural and utter inability to practise this morality in the manner and to the extent required by the teaching of Christ,

unassisted by a direct supernatural power—the influence of the Holy Ghost; thus discarding the effects of the fall, the necessity of an atonement and spiritual regeneration, and taking to himself the sole credit of elevating and perfecting his moral nature, and of thereby qualifying himself for the abode of God.

The real secret of M. Renan's enmity to the Bible as a revelation from God is evidently this, that his proud heart will not stoop to the humbling acknowledgment that he is a sinner needing pardon and purity, and that he is, and will remain exposed to the Divine wrath and the sentence of eternal death, unless in devout recognition of the saving efficacy of the atonement, the salvation which is by grace, he with a contrite heart, bow at the foot of the cross, and as a humble penitent sue for it. The Bible as a Divine revelation he refuses to receive. It does not, he thinks, in all respects meet the requirements of man, and many of its doctrines are at variance with his philosophy. He would fain dictate to the Almighty as to what should or what should not be in a revelation from Him; but not failing to perceive the palpable absurdity of a finite, fallible being presuming to do this, he rejects it as Divine, and pronounces it human; thus placing its Author on common ground with himself, and taking to himself the right of denouncing and expunging according to the dictates and rationalistic fancies of his own proud mind. If the authors of the Gospels, to which he particularly confines himself, in his estimation, speak rationally, he adopts their sentiments as being in accordance with his creed; but if otherwise, then they must submit to his superior intellect taking the precedence of them in the formation of a religious creed, pronouncing against the narration either as being not the genuine production of its

professed authors, although historically equally well authenticated with the other parts which he receives, or that by such misunderstanding or misrepresentation of Christ's true teaching, they clearly indicate their fallibility and mental or moral inferiority to the philosopher who has thus made the discovery and exposed it to the world. And as Jesus is his adopted model of comparative perfection (although according to his fanciful religious creed, he was but human, and lacking also the eighteen centuries of unparalleled development in the world's history which his brethren of our day have the benefit of), if the authors of the Gospels make Him speak aught that philosopher Renan does not approve of, he in general either represents them as having falsified Christ by ascribing to Him a creation of their own minds, or asserts that it must have been the work of an interpolater! Such are the flagrant exhibitions of weakness even in great minds when they would fain reject truths that are distasteful to their moral natures.

M. Renan's only argument against the Divine origin of the Scriptures, and on which sceptics one and all build their visionary theories, is a stubborn and unreasoning disbelief of the supernatural. This argument, however variedly put by different infidel writers, may be summed up thus: Most absurdly assuming that the experience of the present must necessarily have been the experience of all ages, they say, "We do not see miracles performed, and therefore miracles have never been performed. We do not believe in the supernatural, and therefore nothing of the supernatural has ever occurred. *We believe* that the God of nature has eternally and unalterably fixed its laws, and therefore He has done so." Now if they professed universal scepticism as to all historical testimony, there would then have been a

shadow of consistency about their argument; but this they have not done, as they would then be compelled to relinquish every fact both ancient and modern that has come down to us through history. Were they to do this, it would annex something of consistency to their belief, although such belief would be none the less false. Their great inconsistency lies in this: they believe in the validity of historic testimony as to other matters, but touching the supernatural, however overwhelming the historical testimony in its favour, they reject it. History (sacred) and reason testify that God is the Author of nature; they believe it.[1] History and reason testify that God is the Author of the supernatural, of which the creation itself is but an illustration; they will not believe it. History and reason assert that the Author of nature established its laws; they believe it. History and reason assert that while God, being eternal, is immutable, Law, having had an origin, is not necessarily so, and that hence God who established the laws of nature can and does suspend or counteract them at His pleasure; this they will not believe. Theirs (of the Renan school) is not reason therefore, not argument, but innate hatred to the truth they oppose. Nature's laws once established, the Almighty's presence and oversight being, in their estimation, no longer necessary, they would banish Him from the created universe, and shut Him up—they know not where!

This singular style of reasoning, which pervades the entire system of sceptical philosophy, evidently has its origin, not in the intellectual, but in the moral. Such philosophers would exclude the Deity from the throne of His natural dominion, because they are, doubtless, afraid of His associated and inseparable moral dominion. Some of such may be what the world calls moral men, but of the higher kinds

[1] We speak of those who believe in a personal God.

of Christian morality they practically know nothing. They are not Christians. They have not been born again, or created anew in Christ Jesus, and hence are not among the distinguished number who will eventually "love His appearing" as the moral Governor and Judge of mankind. They may, in a certain sense, as Paul said of the Jews, "have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." And hence the Apostle further says: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."[1] This these philosophers, with all who endorse their sentiments, do not believe; and hence, having voluntarily excluded themselves from personal participation in "the salvation which is by Jesus Christ," they cannot be among the "saved." And if not among the saved, then, despite their boasted wisdom and scientific lore, they will sink, with "IGNORANT OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS" sealed upon their brows, to the regions assigned the blind leaders of the blind.

Although Renan wholly ignores the *supernatural* as connected with the Volume of Inspiration, he, by simply making his usual compromise of consistency, plainly recognizes it in his dedicatory epistle. Doubless, inspired by the kindliness of true brotherly feeling, M. Renan dedicates his work to "the pure soul" of his beloved sister, who formerly rendered him assistance in it, but, who having died in a distant land, is now, as he supposes, reposing in "the bosom of God." And he concludes his dedicatory address

[1] Rom x. 9.

by invoking her to render him, by *supernatural* revelation, still further assistance!—"Reveal, O good genius, to me whom thou lovest, those truths which conquer death, deprive it of terror, and make it almost beloved." Silly appeal! we would observe. In vain may he look to her to reveal to him that which God's Word alone can reveal. But this bit of poetic inconsistency in his recognition of the otherwise and elsewhere ignored supernatural, may, perhaps, be attributed to a pardonable weakness arising from an affection for kin. For further judgment as to character in this particular, therefore, we would direct the reader to the flagrant inconsistencies to which we have referred in the body of the work.

What Renan calls the "poetry" of his work is a main feature in it throughout. His aim has been to make it popular—to have it universally loved—as he informs us his beloved sister said she should do. A sentiment of his, as expressed on page 87 of his work—"The poetry which makes the precept loved, is more than the precept itself"—seems to have been the studied principle on which he has modelled his work. It has every characteristic of the sentimentalist, but nothing really adapted to the sincere and earnest inquirer after truth. Of truth it contains little; of varnished falsehood, abundance.

Some of our readers may be disposed to think that in the preceding pages we have occasionally reflected rather severely on the character of M. Renan; but such persons should remember that it has not been without good reason, which, however, was not the case with Renan in his reflections on the character of Jesus and His disciples. Matthew, Mark, Peter, Paul, and other historical characters have quite as good a claim to a respectable character as M. Renan, and

probably held it as sacred, and were as jealous of their good name in the spheres in which they severally moved, as were the most virtuous of their nineteenth century friends who have stigmatized them as lying impostors with regard to more or less of what they have said, written, or professed to have done. Though numbered among the dead, their characters still live, and should be held to be quite as sacred as those of living men. They once lived, were loved and honoured, and, doubtless, maintained a reputation for honesty, truthfulness, and integrity, which will at least compare very favourably with that of their modern calumniators. Nor would these gentlemen have any reason to complain, were they even dealt with as uncharitably, and with as little foundation, as they have dealt with those holy historical personages. They would even then be no more hardly dealt with than they were forewarned to expect, as expressed in the language of one of those whose characters they have wantonly aspersed: "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

M. Renan is rather an elegant writer, but, allow me to add, an exceedingly poor logician. He has made several attempts at logic in the course of his work, and in each (examples of which we have given) he has most signally failed. As a writer, the descriptive and the sentimental are his *forte*, the logical, at least, in matters of religious and spiritual import, being wholly beyond him. It is the heart, the *heart*, however, that is the main trouble with such gentlemen, "the evil heart of unbelief." It is not the head that affects the heart in these matters, but the heart the head. "The whole heart is sick," and this makes "the whole head faint," when attempting to under-

stand or reason upon things spiritual and Divine. His references to certain works written in Greek, or other foreign languages in proof of his positions, except where he makes a quotation giving the literal translation of the author, are absolutely useless to all such as cannot consult the originals for themselves; for, as we have seen in his references to Scripture passages, they frequently not only fail to prove his positions, but actually prove a position the very opposite to the one in proof of which they are cited. His apparent blindness to the most palpable and unmistakable meaning of a passage is extraordinary. He is like a blind man with colour, when he pronounces it white, it is quite as likely to be black. To have the least chance of arriving at the truth in any given case, the reader must consult the passages to which reference is made, and form a judgment for himself.

M. Renan's usual style is not the repulsive positiveness of the *unreasoning* dogmatist, but rather the opposite extreme, which, if possible, is still more repulsive, that of the unreasoning *doubter*. Scepticism on all essential points of Christian doctrine, is the characteristic feature of his work. Its aim is to produce doubts on every important point connected with the Christian religion, save that Jesus Christ existed, and was an eminent teacher of a superior system of practical morality. To introduce into the mind of the reader *doubts* containing the elements of all that is fatal to the higher, moral, and spiritual elevation of the race in time, and to all its hopes for eternity, appears to have been the height of the gentleman's ambition. And so insidiously are they inwrought with the plausible and the true, amid the surroundings of elegant composition, as to hide in a great measure the sting of the serpent while the

venom is being infused. His work, however, so abounds with equivocal and ambiguous expressions, when dwelling on points touching his doctrinal belief, that it is very difficult in some instances to ascertain what is, or what is not his belief. But one thing is clear, that while he has chosen Christ as the foundation of his spiritual edifice, he has withdrawn from Him every attribute that is absolutely essential to such a foundation, and, therefore, the superstructure that he has built thereupon must, like the house of which Jesus tells us, inevitably fall, and be utterly demolished.

It has been remarked, that the work of M. Renan is a marked improvement on French infidelity of the past, and that Renan himself should be regarded as an apostate, not from Christianity, but from Popery, out of the darkness of which, it is thought, he has been groping his way. As to the first, we would here simply observe that to a certain moral class of readers his work is more dangerous and destructive in its tendency, than are the infidel works of the profane and blasphemous Voltaire, Paine, and others. The style of undisguised scoffers is not nearly so potent for evil as is that of a falsely professed friend. I find, moreover, that the book is spoken well of by such characters as the profane, the drunkard, the immoral. These are the characters by whom such works are prized; and to encourage such men in their works of iniquity, M. Renan's talents have therefore been employed. A fig for the ostensible lessons of morality such works may contain; if they come not under the seal of Divinity, they sit very lightly on such men's consciences, and are regarded by them as simply pretty flowers of oratory—mere artistic embellishments to which they have not the slightest objection as a sort of set off to the work, which in its main

features is so soothing to their consciences while indulging in practices, or in the pursuit of objects which corrupt nature delights in, but which the ignored revelation which professes to come to them under the authoritative seal of Divinity condemns. And as to his not being an apostate from Christianity, when it can be shown that the Church of Rome retains and teaches none of the essentially vital and saving doctrines of the Cross, then, but not till then, may the point be conceded that M. Renan is not an apostate from Christianity.

There can be no doubt that the Roman Catholic Church has had many a truly pious soul within its pale—as, for example, the holy Thomas aKempis, Fenelon, and others—and that many a sincere believer in Jesus as the Redeemer, and in the Holy Ghost as the sanctifier of the world, has experienced the transforming power of God's saving grace, and passed finally from that Church's communion, and earth to heaven. Granted that these may be regarded as rare exceptions, saved "so as by fire," on account of the many false doctrines which are interwoven with their belief; yet this does not nullify the obvious fact, that truly religious souls have been nurtured within the pale of that Church, and that, therefore, it must, to some extent, inculcate saving Christian doctrine, and is, to the extent that she does so, Christian in her character as a Church, so generally corrupt and dangerous through her traditionary teaching, indeed, it may be, as to fully justify the application usually made of the Scripture exhortation, "Come out from her, My people;" but certainly not so corrupt that apostatising from her and the Christian doctrine which she teaches, and descending into the thick darkness of soul-damning Infidelity, as M. Renan has done, may, nevertheless, be said to be "groping his way

out of darkness." He has been groping indeed, but it is a groping that has led him farther into darkness. He has been groping in the wrong direction, and the darkness has but increased and grown more dangerous and destructive as he proceeded. And if he changes not his course, there can be no doubt that it will at length end in his reaching and being for ever engulfed in that place of utter and unchangeable "darkness and perdition of ungodly men," where weeping and gnashing of teeth will be the eternal concomitant of their lost and hopeless condition.

That Church is, and has been for many centuries, notoriously in great need of a radical reform, but she is not to be regarded and dealt with as a school of Infidels. Dissent and schism are gradually but surely effecting this, and dissent and schism from the Ultramontane party will doubtless continue until there is nothing of the old school left; and then the work of reform will be continued among the schismatics themselves, ultimating, it is to be hoped, in a pure and holy branch of God's universal Church.

It is of the utmost consequence to those who have no true belief in the saving doctrines of the Cross to note, that however sincere they may think themselves to be in their own belief, sincerity is not salvation. It is simply believing what we profess to believe, which may or may not be the truth. Sincerity in the belief, the heart-felt belief, of Scriptural truth saves, but sincerity in the belief of error does not. Some men's errors are the result of their culpable indifference. God's chosen people, the Jews, were charged with a want of consideration—"My people do not *consider*"—and I believe that sceptics generally may be fairly charged with the same sin. They get hold of a few Infidel

ideas, and without troubling themselves to diligently and impartially enquire into the truth or falsity of them, they pass them on, in ordinary parlance, from one to another, as though they were little if anything short of axiomatic truth. The conversational expression, "Well, that is *my* opinion," so often heard, men should know, must go for nothing, except as based on a true and solid foundation. Men's opinions on vital subjects will ultimate effects for weal or for woe, whether they concern themselves much about the foundation of them or not. And this all-important consideration should lead the well-disposed, the sincere, and the truth-loving, to weigh well the arguments that may be adduced in favour of or against the opinions they may have formed. Men's opinions frequently lead them to ruin, both for time and for eternity. If a traveller be misinformed in reference to the road he is going, will the sincerity of his belief prevent the effects of such misinformation? Clearly not. So, if a man believes a lie on a vital subject connected with the essentials of religion, if he continue, through indifference or obstinacy, to persist in such a belief, he is lost and undone for ever. Let the reader, then, determine that, God helping him, this shall not be his case. Due candour and an earnest, pains-taking, and prayerful concern, are all that any man requires to set him right on all matters of saving import. He should, therefore, aim at this, and ever endeavour to cultivate such a spirit. In such a state of mind, to remain long in doubt as to the truth of the Bible is impossible.

Infidels in general, however, evidently do not wish to believe in the Bible, although it be the truth; for if they did, in view of the infinite importance of the subject, they would use their utmost diligence to read all that could be said in

its favour; whereas it is a melancholy fact, that men are everywhere listening to and receiving every kind of Infidel objection, and will eagerly swallow any amount of falsehood and absurdity in argument against it, but do not care to make themselves acquainted with the mass of evidence which is advanced in its favour. They usually allow themselves to venture just far enough to seize upon the supposed difficulties and mysteries, but do not care for any further testimony. Now why is this, since men do not thus absurdly set aside the dictates of ordinary judgment in matters pertaining to this life? The answer is plain. The heart of man is at enmity with God. He wishes the Bible were false, because his deeds are condemned by it; and so, by degrees, he peruades himself that it is so. The world, moreover, monopolises his attention. He does not take time to seriously *consider*—all-important as the subject is—and the consequence is, conscience becomes seared, the heart hardened, his Infidelity confirmed, and when it is "finished it bringeth forth death"—death spiritual, death eternal!

Touching the question of the Bible's Authenticity, it has been shown in the foregoing pages—First, that such men as the apostles and the other inspired penmen did exist, and write books such as those that have come down to us under their respective names; and this, not only by the books themselves, but also by abundant testimony from the writings of cotemporary and subsequent authors, both Christian and profane. Secondly, that we have the same Scriptures which the early Christians had—churches, with presiding bishops, etc., having existed from the time of the apostles, and a jealous watchfulness having hence been constantly exercised by them with respect to the uncorrupted preservation of those

sacred records of which they were made the depositaries. Furthermore, they are found to agree in substance, not only with all the ancient manuscripts and translations of the Scriptures, but also with all the quotations that have been made from them by foreigners and others, at different periods and for different purposes; these quotations being so numerous and lengthy that they embody the whole Gospel. Thirdly, that the Scripture writers could not have been deceived themselves, for they were eye and ear witnesses of that to which they bore testimony; nor could they, nor would they if they could, deceive others, having no imaginable motive for so doing, being despised and persecuted even unto death; and from this, as well as from the straightforward, artless style and manifest faithfulness of their narrations, it is evident that they were honest, upright men. Fourthly, that the Divine authenticity of the Scriptures was attested, when first received, by numerous real and astounding miracles, betokening the indubitable presence of an omnipotent Power. Fifthly, that it has been, and still continues to be, attested by the striking fulfilment of numerous distinct and unmistakable prophecies relating to events and circumstances, such as none but God could foretell. And lastly, that the effects produced on individuals in particular, and nations in general, whenever and wherever introduced and cordially embraced, invariably correspond with the effects which the Scriptures claim to have the power of producing. These points having been shown to be susceptible of the clearest demonstration, the conclusion is inevitable—The Bible is from God, the Bible IS TRUE.

The preaching of Christ crucified may still continue for a time to be to the Jews a "stumbling-block," and to the

modern Greeks "foolishness;" but it will also continue as ever "to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Its irresistible power and immutable character will continue to evince the certainty of its Divine original, while *Rationalism* (so called) and all other opposing *isms* shall successively rise and fall, come and go, like the floating fleecy cloud, exciting, it may be, the momentary curiosity of dreamy spectators, but quickly disappearing—successor and predecessor alike passing into the oblivion whence they came, and which is the common receptacle of all such floating vanities.

The sentimental love such as M. Renan cherishes for Jesus is barren of Divine influence and transforming power. It is a love that is natural, and therefore may be cultivated and increased by purely natural means. But the love of God, we are told, is not natural to man in his present condition; the love of the mere sentimentalist, therefore, being natural, is essentially different from the true and pure love of God. It knows nothing of pardon, regeneration, and true purity of heart, and therefore leaves its possessor, as it found him, in a state of unchanged enmity to God. A man may become so benighted as to be, no doubt, quite conscientious in his efforts at attaining a love of this description, as Renan himself appears to be; but conscience, it must be remembered, is a very accommodating thing, and hence, according to its peculiar training, may lead its possessor either directly to heaven or to hell. It is only so far as it is truly enlightened in a Scriptural sense, that its monitions are a safe guide in matters of religion. Truly enlightened, and kept void of offence toward God and man, by the power of Divine grace acting upon the will in unison with its power of voluntary

action, the religion of conscience becomes the religion of the heart, of the Bible, and of God.

This internal monitor Scripturally enlightened, and its internal monitions scrupulously observed, you are safe; but its Scriptural training and enlightenment neglected, the darkness of death will envelop you, and the doom of a hopeless eternity will await you. Come, then, fellow-sinner, we invite you, come to the throne of the heavenly grace, and plead with the Father, in the name of the Son, for the Spirit's enlightenment. Awake from the sleep of spiritual death; "Arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light"—wrestle, plead, agonise with God; prove Him, and see if He will not pour down upon you the Spirit of enlightenment, of faith, and of power, by which alone can be tested the purifying efficacy of the Redeemer's blood. Humble yourself under His mighty hand, confess your sins before God, plead the merits of His Son, and sure as He hath died, your debt being paid, your soul is free, and you are justified. Thenceforth you shall praise and give thanks; and being faithful to the grace imparted, your pathway shall be "that of the just which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Your faith, by which you appropriate to yourself all the spiritual benefits of the atonement, and grasp the living realities of the unseen world, shall greatly increase; your well-grounded hopes shall increasingly abound; and your joy in present possession of the Divine Comforter, and blessed anticipation of future glory, shall from time to time be unspeakable and full!

These, be it remembered, "are the words of truth and soberness," rational experience, incontestable reality, as far removed from the airy sentimentalism and unreasoning

chimeras of a sceptical Renan, as truth is from error, as light is from darkness. God's Holy Spirit being sincerely, reverently, and earnestly supplicated, His revealed Word becomes truly "a light to our feet and a lamp unto our path." The conscience becomes enlightened; in due time, perhaps immediately, faith springs up in the heart, the sinner, being penitent and believing, is pardoned, his affections are thenceforth spiritualised, his heart purified, and his entire inner being quickened into newness of life—new impulses, feelings, desires, motives, will be consciously realised, the holy character of which clearly bespeaks their Divine origin.

In bringing this my first effort at book writihg to a close, I would devoutly record my sincere thanks to the great Giver of all good for the assistance He has rendered me in it. Many a time have I, when engaged in the prosecution of the work, feeling my need of assistance, raised my heart—not to the spirit of a deceased sister for her inspiring help, as M. Renan—but to Him who hath promised that if any man "lack wisdom," and "ask of God in faith, nothing wavering, it shall be given him;" and it has not been in vain. God's inspiring Spirit, we are assured, is with His people in all ages of the world. He is with them not only as a Regenerator, Sanctifier, and Comforter, but as a Helper to them "in every time of need." And so, also, to every man who has a heart to "do His will," is the help of the enlightening, inspiring Spirit promised—be the need intellectual or spiritual, of the head or of the heart. "If any man will do His will" he shall be so effectually influenced and guided by the inspiring Spirit, that "he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."

The writer's task is now done; and as he has been stimu-

lated in the performance of it by the assurance that his "labour shall not be in vain in the Lord," so now that it is completed, he trusts that God who alone can give it true success, will give it His blessing, and cause it to accomplish the end whereunto it is written.

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